

## **I Will Go**

*Deborah: The Courageous Warrior*

Judges 4

January 28, 2024

HDBC

This is the third in the sermon series ***I Will Go***. There are times when each of us must go. The places are different, the times are different, and the reasons are different. But sometimes, ***going*** is what we must do. In case you've wondered, the grandfather clock in the foyer is a reminder that ***It is time to go***.

It is time to go to our neighbors to share Jesus or at least invite them to church.  
It is time to go to a ministry in our church and get involved.  
It is time to go to a small group and get connected.  
It will soon be time to join an E-group to grow in your faith.  
It is time for many of us to go to another city, state or country on a mission team.

**When God calls you . . . it is time to go!**

**Wherever God calls you . . . it is time to go!**

**Whatever God calls you to do . . . it is time to go!**

In the series, we are looking at examples of men and women who answered the call to go. Isaac heard God's call and was a willing volunteer. Abraham heard God's call and was willing to move to an unknown place and unknown future.

Today we are going to look at a lady who is often ignored. This is a mistake. She was called of God to go to war, to win a battle, to get personally involved at a dark time in Israel's history. She was called to get involved in an important conflict and she answered the call, running toward the enemy, even as David would later run toward Goliath.

I love the way Warren Wiersbe introduces the main characters.

**Jabin:** King of Hazor; in Canaan; **a tyrant.**

**Deborah:** Jewish judge; a woman of faith and courage.

**Barak:** Reluctant Jewish general

**Sisera:** Captain in Jabin's army.

- Heber:** A Kenite neighbor, at peace with Jabin.  
**Jael:** Heber's wife; handy with a hammer. (If you know, you know)  
**God:** In charge of wars and weather. I love this!

I've got 8 points on the outline, so let's dive in.

### 1. The Sins of the Nation (1)

This is the time of the judges. It was a rollercoaster time in Israel's history. The cycles generally went like this. Prosperity led to forgetting God, resulting in sinful practices, often including idolatry. Discipline from God, usually in the form of an invading army which would defeat Israel. They would live under the domination of the enemy for years. Finally, the people would confess, repent and cry out to God for deliverance. God would hear, forgive, raise up a deliverer and the people would live in peace for a season. They would become prosperous again the cycle would repeat. **See verse 1.**

### 2. The Discipline of God (2)

This story follows the cycle that I shared. Because of the sins of the people, God once again allowed them to be defeated, and oppressed by a pagan king and his army. In this case it was King Jabin and his military leader, General Sisera.

**Hazor** is mentioned in Joshua 11, where the capture of that city during the conquest of Canaan is described. It was 8 miles north of the sea of Galilee and was burned by Joshua but rebuilt later by the Canaanites. It is now a century later and the city has regained its prominence as a Canaanite stronghold.

**Sisera** had a massive army with 900 iron chariots. They had a clear military advantage over the Israelites. It would take an act of God for the Israelites to defeat this army and regain their freedom.

### 3. The Repentance of the People (3)

The people knew they were powerless to gain their freedom. Their only hope was to cry out to God. So, they did. It is never too early to seek the Lord. It is never too early to confess sin and repent. The sooner the better. God waits, ready to forgive and ready to bless. **Deborah now enters the story.**

#### 4. **The Plan of God (4-7)**

In response to the prayers of the people, God initiates a plan to bring freedom and peace to his people. It would mean going to war, taking a risk, stepping out in faith, but He assured them that they would win. But first,

##### **Let's learn about Deborah.**

She was a judge. She had a fixed spot where people could come to her when they were in a dispute or needed help working out conflicts. The location was about 50 miles south of where the ultimate battle would be fought. She was also a prophetess. She received messages from God and relayed them to the people. Clearly, she was a respected leader in her community.

##### **Note the message from God.**

She summoned Barak and indicated that God had called him to lead an army against the great Sisera. He was to assemble an army of 10,000 and march toward Mt. Tabor. It was a cone-shaped mountain in the valley of Jezreel. It rises about 1,300 feet above sea level. It was a prominent landmark which could not be mistaken. It was also about 6 miles east of Nazareth.

**The Lord promised** to draw Sisera and his army to the Kishon river, where they would be destroyed. No more details are given. It would require a great step of faith for Barak and the army. But God was asking them to trust Him.

#### 5. **The Cowardly Soldier (8)**

When he heard the plan, Barak had a quick response. I'll give him credit for not saying "no." But his answer was also not one that demonstrated great faith or courage. In what may be one of the more surprising negotiations found in the Bible, he agreed to go, but only if Deborah would go with him.

What a cowardly and strange thing to offer. Could it be that he doubted that her message had truly come from God and wanted to test her? Was this a double or triple dare? He was passing the ball back to her. He was dodging his responsibility. When God says go, that's what some people do. They don't want to go alone. They want to negotiate with God.

Unlike Barak, Deborah was bold, courageous and decisive. All of those things are seen in her response.

## 6. The Courageous Warrior (9)

Here is my quick summation of her answer. ***Sure, I'll go. But a woman will get the glory when the victory happens.*** I'm sure Barak thought she was referring to herself. When you first read this part of the story, it's probably what you think, as well. She did receive glory for the victory, but she was not the only female hero in the story.

## 7. The Big Victory (14-15)

The army, led by Deborah and Barak marched toward the site of the battle. As predicted, Sisera brought his army with his 900 chariots to crush the rebels. And true to her nature, Deborah continued to exhibit great courage and faith. Note her declaration in 14. ***Arise! For this is the day the Lord has given Sisera into your hands; behold, the Lord has gone out before you. When you set your face toward the enemies of God and you march toward the battle, you can also know that God has gone before you.*** And that makes all the difference in the world.

Verse 15 summarizes the victory. The Lord ***routed*** Sisera's army. By the way, Judges 5:4-5, 20-21 suggests that at just the right time a sudden, torrential downpour caused the valley to quickly become swollen with water, flooding the plains and rendering the chariots useless. The army was defeated. However, the general himself escaped, running for his life. That leads to the . . .

## 8. The Gruesome Finale (17-22)

Let me just **read what happened**. Well, okay. That's pretty gruesome. Not only was Deborah the hero, but Jael became an unlikely hero, herself.

### **Application:**

This account described a real battle. It was fought on physical land, with physical weapons, by physical people. But it also pictures another war that is unseen by human eyes, and which is not fought by physical weapons. It is a war between good and evil, right and wrong, God and Satan.

The outcome is not in doubt. God will win because He has already won. Yet battles still rage in this broken, sin-filled world. This is why we find so much war and soldier language in the Bible, even in the New Testament. Though this is a

war between spiritual beings, primarily God and Satan, we are drawn in. We are drawn in by Satan who wants to destroy our lives because we are loved by God. We are drawn in by God who wants to use us to accomplish His will in defeating the enemy. Like Barak and Deborah, we are often called to go to war with the forces of darkness.

Maybe it's a call to a season of prayer for someone in need.

Maybe it's a call to a certain ministry that will be a struggle.

Maybe it's a call to go to ward with the flesh and give up some sin or habit.

Maybe it's a call to go to go to battle on behalf of an unreached people group.

Maybe it's a call to do spiritual battle against some moral evil in our day.

When the call comes for you to go into the battle, be like Deborah, not Barak.

**Acknowledge the reality of spiritual warfare.**

**Listen for the call of God to join the battle.**

**When called to go, courageously run toward the battle.**

**Trust God to bring victory and praise Him when He does.**

Tishia Whipkey joined HDBC in 2016. I'm sure she had no idea of the journey the Lord was about to take her on. She not only became an active member, but quickly began to involve herself in ministries and missions. In time, the Lord began to call her to go further and deeper. He called her to be on the front lines of ministry and thus, on the front lines of spiritual warfare. I want you to hear her testimony.

**Play Video – IWG Tishia**

The Lord called her to a ministry position, and she answer the call. If He calls you, are you ready to say yes?