

# The Story of God's Crushing Victory

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 14 June 2026

Preacher: Josh Johnston

[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to turn now, though, to our Bibles this morning, and we're reading together.! Josh has been preaching through these early chapters of the book of Judges. So do turn! in your Bibles. If you don't have a Bible with you, if you're a visitor, there's Bibles at the sides, at the back. Stewards will be very glad to bring you one. Do get a hold of one so that you can read along with us. And we're going to be reading this morning chapter 4 of Judges.

Now, in those visitor's Bibles, I think it's page 203, book of Joshua, then Judges. And we come to a very dramatic story. Well, they're all dramatic stories, really, in Judges, aren't they? But here's another one in Judges chapter 4. And I'm going to begin at verse 1, which begins with a very familiar refrain that we're getting used to already in this book. And the people of Israel, Israel again, did what was evil in the sight of the Lord after Ehud, the last judge, died.

And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Haroshet Hagoyim. Then the people of Israel cried out to the Lord for help, for he had 900 chariots of iron, and he oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for 20 years. Now, Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Labeledot, was judging Israel at that time.

She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim. And the people of Israel came up to her for judgment. She sent and summoned Barak, the son of Abinoam, from Kedesh Naphtali, and said to him, 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?

And I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the river Kishon, with his chariots and his troops. And I will give him into your hand. And 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.

[ 2 : 29 ] And she said, I will surely go with you. Nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead you to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.

Then Deborah rose and went with Barak to Kedesh. And Barak called out Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh, and 10,000 men went up at his heels, and Deborah went up with him.

Now Heber, the Kenite, had separated from the Kenites, the descendants of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far away as the oak in Zanamim, which is near Kedesh.

When Sisera was told that Barak, the son of Abinoam, had gone up to Mount Tabor, Sisera called out all his chariots, 900 chariots of iron, and all the men who were with him, from Haroshet, Hagohim, to the river of Kishon.

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? So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men following him.

[ 3 : 42 ] And the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army before Barak by the edge of the sword. And Sisera got down from his chariot and fled away on foot.

And Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Haroshet Hagohim. And all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword.

Not a man was left. But Sisera fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. For there was peace between Jabba and the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.

And Jael came out to meet Sisera and said to him, Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me, do not be afraid. So he turned aside to her into the tent. And she covered him with a rug.

And he said to her, Please, give me a little water to drink for I am thirsty. So she opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and covered him. And he said to her, Stand at the opening of the tent and if any man comes and asks you, Is anyone here? Say no.

[ 4 : 51 ] 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. And behold, as Barak was pursuing Sisera, Jael went out to meet him and said to him, Come, and I'll show you the man you're seeking.

So he went into her tent, and there lay Sisera dead with a tent peg in his temple. So on that day God subdued Jabba and the king of Canaan before the people of Israel.

And the hand of the people of Israel pressed harder and harder against Jabba and the king of Canaan until they destroyed Jabba, king of Canaan.

Amen. And may God bless to us his word. Well, do you open your Bibles once again to Judges chapter 4.

[ 6 : 01 ] And as you do so, think for a moment about some of the ways that you might describe the Lord God. I'm sure many of us would go to ideas and words like, God is love.

God is holy. He's gracious. He's merciful. But I wonder how many of us think of God as a warrior. Well, the Bible speaks of God as just that. At key junctures in the life of his people, God acts as a warrior. Moses' song, back in Exodus 15, says exactly that.

The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is his name. Now, perhaps that can make us a little uncomfortable.

I thought Jesus came to bring peace on earth. What's all this business about war? Well, a key Bible idea that we need to grasp is that the good news of the victory of God's kingdom, that is the gospel, does promise peace, but is able to do so only because God's enemies have been subdued and defeated.

[ 7 : 25 ] And will be subdued and defeated. Even at the very beginning of Genesis 3, at the fall, we see that conflict is now part and parcel of life in this fallen world.

The serpent will bruise the heel of the seed of the woman, even as the serpent will have its head crushed. And throughout the rest of Genesis and the Bible, we see the ongoing conflict between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.

Ever since the fall, there is a conflict written into the fabric of this world. God will win it as the great warrior that he is, but he also calls his people to join him in that fight, assured that he will triumph.

So look around, folks, sitting beside us this morning. We mightn't all look like it, but we are all soldiers, warriors.

I wonder if you've ever considered the fact that the Tron Church is but a small regiment of the Lord's army. Of course, the war of the Lord's people here in the Old Testament was fought with swords and armor, but now in the age of the church, those are not our weapons, and that's not our war.

[ 8 : 49 ] Our weapons are the scriptures and prayer. And we do have real enemies. We have the enemies of the world, the flesh and the devil. The world, not the created order, but rather the values, the priorities, the powers organized in rebellion against God, the culture and spirit of the age pressing upon us from outside.

And the flesh, not our physical bodies, but the lingering sinful nature within the believer, the indwelling sin that tempts us and wages war against our newfound identity in Christ.

And the devil, that real and personal adversary, powerful and cunning, who prowls around, seeking whom he may devour. He plots, he launches fiery darts, attempting to divert and distract and delude and deceive and destroy the Lord's people.

We have real enemies, but also the task of the church and indeed each Christian. What we're saved to, what we're saved for is the service of the gospel.

And that too is described in the language of war. Paul urges Timothy to share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus, to fight the good fight of the faith.

[ 10 : 09 ] He speaks to the Corinthians of waging war and of the gospel being God's divine power to destroy strongholds and false arguments and dangerous opinions.

Brothers and sisters, to become a Christian is to be born into battle. It's to bow to Jesus as our savior, our king, and our captain.

It's his fight and he will be victorious, but he bids his people to join him in the fight that they might share with him in the victory.

A fight that will see Jesus' kingdom victorious as it spreads all over this world. And the passage we have before us, Judges 4, will gird us up for this warfare.

Remember, one of the reasons that we've seen already that the Lord disciplines his people in the time of Judges was chapter 3, verse 2, so that his people might learn war.

[11:18] The conquest generation knew what it was to fight and trust God, but subsequent generations also needed to be trained in war so that their trust in the Lord might be revealed and refined.

And that's what we see happening in this passage with Deborah and Barak and Gile. Now, one last thing before we dive into the detail. It's important to note that Judges chapter 4 and Judges chapter 5 go together.

Much like the two-part introduction to Judges that we've already seen, we're given two accounts of the same event in chapter 4 and 5. Two versions of the same event.

Chapter 4, what we're looking at today, is the story or the proofs that tells us of God's crushing victory. And chapter 5, all being well, next week, we'll see the song or the praise that helps us understand more fully God's wondrous working through these events.

But chapter 4 then, we have the events as a narrative with only the minimal detail that's required for us to understand what has happened. And the first thing we see, scene 1, is a picture of a cruel enemy, verses 1 to 3, a cruel enemy.

[12:37] Selling out the Lord will always bring misery at the hands of a very cruel enemy. Verse 1, after Ehud died, the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.

That is, the people once again returned to worshipping idols, committing spiritual adultery against Yahweh, their maker, their saviour, and their Lord. This isn't the stumbling sin of Christians baffling to be faithful, but selling out, giving over to sin, delighting in it, longing to do it, pouring ourselves around an idol.

And we've already seen, we've already been told about this pattern back in chapter 2, verse 19, when the judges die, the people turn to even more corruption. And just as the corruption ramps up, so do the consequences.

Do you see verse 2? The Lord sold his people to Jabin, king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. It's sometimes easy for us or perhaps tempting to overlook the various place names and the geography that the Bible gives us as if it's unnecessary detail.

But here we're told that Jabin was king of Canaan. He was only here in the land of Canaan still because of Israel's failure to clear out the land.

[14:05] The enemies in chapter 3, they were from outside the land, from Mesopotamia and places like that, but now enemies, kings within the land, the bitter consequences of their disobedience.

But we're also told Jabin reigned in Hazor and that his commander lived in Harasheth Haggaiim. Now geographically, this gave them a stranglehold across the whole north of the land and over key routes throughout the land.

But also, the name of where Sisera lived, Harasheth Haggaiim, means Harasheth of the Gentiles. Here was a Gentile stronghold in the land.

All of this was a grim picture for Israel, but we're told more, verse 3, this stranglehold was maintained by 900 iron chariots. Mightn't sound that impressive to us today, but an iron chariot was the high-tech weaponry of the day.

Against soldiers, an iron chariot would have a field day, like a rocket or a drone or a high-tech tank today. And 900 of them. This was a fearsome army with a ferocious weapon.

[15:27] And for 20 years, Sisera oppressed Israel cruelly. Eight years, then 18 years in chapter 3, but now 20 years of cruel oppression.

This opening scene is here to show us the frightening might of the enemy. Israel had a fearsome and cruel enemy. Brothers and sisters, if we sell out the Lord God, we are setting ourselves up to face the fangs of the evil one.

Ferocious fangs. There is a real enemy in this world who loves to devour and destroy. Indeed, this world is under his sway and to abandon and forsake God.

To give up on him and pour ourselves out into something that we love in this world instead. To give up the battle, to give up the struggle, is to walk into the territory of the evil one.

And his oppression is crippling and cruel. Friends, we knew that, don't we? To choose an idol, to be given holy to the alluring power of sin so that we cease to listen to God's gracious commands, that is to sip salt water.

[16:53] It's reaching out for something that seems so promising for the desires that bubble up within us, to reach out for what looks like it will quench our thirst, only to find that we've been invited into something, that we've invited something in that will reap destruction upon us, that can never satisfy, that only makes things worse.

Selling out the Lord will always bring misery at the hands of a very cruel enemy. That's scene two, but scene two, scene one, but scene two shows us then in verses four to seven, a compassionate God, a compassionate God.

The Lord's compassion comes to his helpless people in a command and a promise. Verse three, the people once again cried out to the Lord amidst their oppression and we see the Lord answer it. Verse four, the Lord answered by raising up Deborah and giving her his word. Now before we move on, we should notice Deborah's role here.

Modern readers often come to this passage with questions about women and leadership, particularly in the church. Those questions are not the main concern of Judges four.

[18:06] This chapter is not given to settle questions about church order. It's not given as a test case for women's leadership. It's given to show us the astonishing rescue of the Lord's people.

And so we don't have time to dive into that particular rabbit hole, but still, Deborah is clearly a gift of God's grace. In a time of calamity, the Lord raises up a prophetess, a judge, and as chapter five calls her, a mother in Israel to speak his word, to call his people back into the battle, back into life with God.

But even here, the passage does not erase the difference between men and women. Deborah speaks the Lord's words, but she summons Barak to take up arms.

Unlike all the other warrior deliverers, all the other judges in the book, Deborah does not lead the army into battle. She does not fight.

She calls Barak to obey the Lord who has commanded him to go and fight. And that's really the point. In these dark days of the judges, days that we'd be very careful by emulating, in these particularly dark days, God uses surprising and extraordinary means, Ehud, the left-handed liverer, Shamgar with his ox good, and here, two women, Deborah and Jael.

[19:42] And he does so so that everyone can see that salvation belongs to the Lord. Who but the Lord could design it in such a way to take those whom this world might overlook or deny honor and use them as instruments of his gracious rescue?

Well, verse 5 tells us that Deborah, this gift of God's grace, sat beneath the palm tree between Ramah and Bethel, and the people came to her for judgment and divine wisdom.

And so when Deborah summons Barak in verse 6, he comes. Barak lived to the north in Kedesh Naphtali, close to Hazor, where Jabin was ruling.

And so the Lord summons a man from the very region that's been held by Jabin. He knew the enemy. He knew all about those chariots. And he comes to Deborah and Deborah has a message for him.

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?

[20:56] Those were the two regions closest to where King Jabin was. The people cry out and God answers by summoning Barak. Notice Deborah isn't acting as a general and inventing a clever battle plan.

No, she says, the Lord, has not the Lord commanded you? It's the Lord's initiative, the Lord's battle, the Lord's rescue. Now, we can easily overlook what this must have sounded like to Barak.

We know how the story ends. We know the pattern and judges. But Barak has just been commanded to assemble 10,000 men and go against Sisera's iron chariots.

Humanly speaking, to go into a battle that looked like certain slaughter. It's a big ask, isn't it? But God's commands never come without sufficient reason to trust and obey Him.

And here, the big ask comes with a big reassurance. Verse 7, the Lord says, I will draw out Sisera to meet you by the river Kishon and I will give him into your hand.

[ 22 : 08 ] I will draw out Sisera, I will give him into your hand. The Lord commands Barak to war, but He also promises victory. And brothers and sisters, we have the same God as Barak, do we not?

We too are drawn into warfare. We face the fearsome enemies that are the world, the flesh and the devil. We contend for the gospel, defending it from distortion and declaring it to people who desperately need to submit to Christ and be brought to life through Him.

And that war can feel like a very big ask at times, can't it? Perhaps right now, at this very moment, your own service of Christ feels riddled with disappointment, discouragement.

The mess that sin makes just seems immovable. Perhaps Satan's schemes seem unassailable.

Maybe you're sitting here wondering, can the gospel really progress?

Is all of this worth the slog and the fight? Well, here, the Lord is teaching His people warfare and we need to be skilled in it too.

[ 23 : 23 ] Judges 4 does not pretend that this is a phony war. The chariots are real. The opposition is fierce. There will be wounds and weariness and profound discouragement.

It may even feel to us like Satan can and does and is giving us a good working over our Christian walk. It might feel like our church, perhaps your ministry within it, is riddled with mess and problems and the things that demoralize.

That isn't denied here. The Lord's encouragement is not that there'll be no hard battles. It's that the outcome of this war is not in doubt.

In Judges 4, He promises victory over Jabin and Sisera and God summons to us to wage the good warfare and fight the good fight of the faith is also a command accompanied by a promise.

Jesus assures us that He will build His church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

[ 24 : 30 ] This is the Lord's war. The Lord will have the victory. God never loses. Not ever. Well, scene 3, verses 8 to 14, we see commendable faith.

Commendable faith. Real faith takes God at His word, obeying even when circumstances seem to work against it. All right, Barak often gets bad press.

In verse 8, he says to Deborah, if you will go with me, I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go. And many conclude that, well, Barak is weak, cowardly, hiding behind Deborah.

Well, I'm often wary of commentators who give characters in the Bible a hard time when the text doesn't explicitly condemn them. Barak isn't condemned here. In fact, as we go on, we see that he is obedient to the Lord.

But I think there's more to support Barak's case than just missing condemnation. Turn over to Hebrews chapter 11. Hebrews 11 is a chapter that could be entitled The Hall of Faith.

[ 25 : 52 ] And it's filled with examples of the faith that has, as Hebrews 11, 1 says, the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen.

And having spelt out in some detail the examples of people like Abraham and Moses, look at verse 32 and following. And what more shall I say?

For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the swords, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war and put foreign armies to flight.

You see, Barak is held up here by the writer of Hebrews as an example of faith. He's commended as one who became mighty in war and put foreign armies to flight.

Well, what then was commendable about his faith? First, we see that he is under authority. Barak's response is best understood not as him shrinking back from God's command, but rather as expressing dependence upon God's word.

[ 27 : 22 ] Deborah is not going to fight for him. She is the prophetess through whom the Lord's command and promise have come. And verse 14 shows the importance of her presence for this fight. Do you see, at the decisive moment, she again speaks to the word of the Lord.

Up, for this is the day. Barak isn't dodging God's command. He's showing his dependence upon it. Barak has an enormous challenge laying ahead of him. He has a serious battle to fight and he doesn't want to do so without the word of God being close by. I take it that that is why he soooed desires to have Deborah join him.

And isn't that exactly what we might expect to be present where real faith is? Not self-dependence, not a confident assertion of no problem, I'll go and smash them myself.

Not self-dependence, but rather scripture dependence. we must give ourselves to the battle only under the authority and direction of God's word.

[ 28 : 33 ] If the Bible isn't in the driving seat of our church, of our lives, then whatever our fighting might look like, it won't be the Lord's warfare.

we need to make it our motto that nothing is ever made better with a closed Bible. Indeed, any situation is improved with an open one.

He's under authority, but commendable faith is also content being unsung. In verse nine, Deborah agrees to accompany Barak. God's word has summoned him, and God's propheticess will accompany God's warrior.

But notice that whilst Barak will go, and the presence of God's word will go with him, Barak will not emerge from the battle as the one who claims the glory. Indeed, Deborah prophesies that Sisera shall be given into the hand of a woman.

And at this time, that was that would be a cause of great shame. Over in Judges chapter 9, Abimelech says that exact thing. God has designed things so that the praise and glory do not go to his servants, but to him.

[ 29 : 52 ] Notice this doesn't say that the glory will go to the women, just that it won't go to Barak. The glory for this victory is going to go to the Lord. And the reality is that real faith, doesn't serve in the Lord's army so that glory might be attained.

Real faith isn't seeking a stage, but service. Barak is a model to us because he was willing to take up this formidable task, even though there be no honor or glory in it for him.

Friends, that is a vital word for any who will serve in the Lord's church. Real faith does not seek for status and applause. glory in the Lord's glory.

thanks. It takes on tasks that do not promise glory because the glory is to be the Lord's. That is a word for all of us.

But a particular word to those who would want to pursue ministry or to take real responsibility for ministry, glory in there is no room for the pursuit of personal glory in the Lord's army.

[ 30 : 59 ] We must be willing to labor unnoticed and in unglamorous ways for the Lord's glory. And then thirdly, Barak's commendable faith is undaunted in the face of trouble.

Do you see what Barak does? Having heard the words of the Lord, having been assured of his prophet's presence, Barak, verse 10, goes and calls out 10,000 men. And then as the Lord promised, the Lord draws out Sisera, verse 13, who called every single one of his 900 chariots and amassed his formidable army.

A fearsome sight, a terrifying army, laden with the best weaponry, lined up, waiting to strike. Verse 14, Deborah says to Barak, up, this is the day in which the Lord has given Sisera into your hand.

Does not the Lord go out before you? Well, that's the question, isn't it? Does he go out before Barak? Because if not, Barak is about to be smashed to pieces.

But notice the end of verse 14, Barak's faith is obvious. He goes to fight. And there's extra detail there, isn't there? Barak went down the mountain.

[ 32 : 17 ] Barak comes down from the comparative safety of Mount Tabor, where chariots wouldn't be very useful, down from the mountain onto the ground where under normal circumstances, Sisera's chariots appeared to hold the overwhelming advantage.

Courageous faith in response to God's word. Barak trusts the word of the Lord, he's obedient to it, even when it may bring either real or perceived trouble. Isn't that exactly what the Lord's people have to learn in war and love war?

Brothers and sisters, that is exactly what the Lord's training in warfare is designed to produce. People who trust his word when visible circumstances point the other way.

Now, the reality is that we aren't likely to be stared down by chariots or tanks, but Paul does tell us that we face strong holds, arguments, lofty opinions raised against the knowledge of God, all manner of ideologies that attack his truth and reject his authority and corrupt and spoil this world. But in the face of all of that, the Lord is teaching us to trust him. His word will never be shown to be untrue or unhelpful or unhinged.

[ 33 : 40 ] His word is the most sure thing in this world. It will prevail. It will endure for eternity long after the flags of every ideological flavor of the month have fallen in this world.

Real faith trusts God even when things look unpromising. Real faith is undaunted because it trusts the power and truth of God's word.

we can trust the almighty word of the Lord. And that's what we see with crystal clarity in scene 4. A crushing victory. Verses 15 to 24. Crushing victory.

When the Lord goes to war, no enemy can stand and no detail lies outside his sovereign design.

We've had all this build up and then the bulk of the action is done in two verses.

Verse 15, Sisera is righted. He and all his chariots and all his army are righted before Barak by the edge of the sword. And just in case we haven't picked it up, the Lord righted Sisera.

[ 34 : 50 ] The Lord raised up Deborah. The Lord commanded Barak. The Lord promised to draw out Sisera. The Lord who went out before Barak, this same Lord writes Sisera. And so much so that Sisera comes down from his chariot and flees on foot.

He abandons his strength or supposed strength. The great and mighty strength of the enemy, their chariots, is turned upside down in the face of God's might. Chariots, what chariots, the Lord might say.

And so verse 16, all the army of Sisera fell by the sword, not a man was left except the fleeing Sisera himself. Verse 17, Sisera runs to the tent of a woman named Jael.

Notice she was the wife of Haber, the Kenite. That was a household who had some sort of peace deal with Jabin. So here, Sisera arrived at what he thought would be a safe haven.

Jael says, turn aside to me, don't be afraid, verse 18. Exhausted from battle and flight, Sisera asks for a drink, tells Jael to keep watch, and he falls fast asleep.

[ 36 : 07 ] And here, Deborah's prophecy comes true. Pitching tents was woman's work at this time. So Jael takes her familiar tools, a peg and a hammer, and drives the peg into Sisera's head.

And then comes one of the Bible's most unnecessary looking sentences. So he died. And Barak finally catches up, verse 22, and meets Jael and says, I'll show you the man you seek.

Barak, no doubt, draws his sword ready to seal the victory, only to walk into the tent to a scene just like Eglon's men had. There, lying on the ground, was the tyrant, dead.

A very nasty, bloody end. child's deceit and violence may shock us, but the Bible does not condemn her.

In fact, chapter 5 will call her blessed among women. Whatever questions we have about the means that the text presents, whatever questions we might have about the means, the text presents Sisera's death as the Lord's judgment upon Israel's cruel enemy.

[ 37 : 24 ] This was a crushing victory for Israel and for the Lord. Indeed, this whole episode of victory is a testament to God's glory. Notice the difference between this story and the story of Ehud last week.

Last week, Ehud was the lone hero, but not this time. There are three of them. Deborah speaks the words, Barak leads the army, Giles strikes the killing blow.

The Lord has spread the rescue across three servants in this episode so that none of them can claim the victory on their own because God alone stands over the whole story as its great hero.

You might have noticed that we skipped over verse 11. Look back at verse 11. On first reading, this can seem like a bit of an obscure and random detail, lodged right into the middle of all the detail about Barak summoning his army and going out to meet Sisera.

In the midst of all that detail, we have this little tribe, the Kenites, who were mentioned back in chapter 1, descendants of Moses' father-in-law. But we're told in verse 11 that Heber had broken away from the rest of the Kenites.

[ 38 : 43 ] and notice He'd pitched his tent near Kedesh, near where this battle was going to unfold. It seems terribly random, some camping updates amidst war and battle, but really this is the writer showing us God's magnificent orchestration of His crushing victory over His enemies, a victory that brings peace.

That's where it ends in verse 23 and 24. after Sisera dies, Jabin is subdued and destroyed. Peace, respite from oppression.

And it's a key Bible idea that peace for God's people comes only because the enemy is judged, defeated, crushed. Peace, yes, but only through war, only through a crushing victory, but a crushing victory that's been knitted together in the mind and the plans of God.

So that Haber, husband of Jael, moves camp away from his people to just the right spot. Indeed, they move their tent to pitch it near the very place this battle would unfold, a tent that would be pitched with tent pegs and a hammer.

It may even be significant that both women are introduced beside trees. Deborah, beneath her palm, verse 11, Jael pitched near the oak.

[ 40 : 15 ] The Lord's rescue begins, as it were, beneath Deborah's tree, the speaking of his word, and it ends near Jael's tree with a crushing of his enemy. And we knew, don't we, that at another tree, one with a cross beam, and because of another tree, that a different head was crushed.

We are a regiment in the Lord's army, but ours is a king and a captain who has orchestrated the greatest of victories. The true king has crushed the head of the great enemy, and he now sits at God's right hand until every single enemy is made his footstool.

And he offers peace because he has made peace by the blood of his cross. And he promises final peace because every enemy will finally be crushed under his feet.

And as he beckons each of us to be soldiers in that warfare, as he beckons our church to line up in formation for the fight, he does so while saying, does not the Lord go out before you?

We are engaged in war, real war, against a cruel enemy, but God assures us of a crushing victory. He says to us, does not the Lord go out before you?

[ 41 : 59 ] Well, amen. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we are so conscious of all that assails us in this world.

In truth, for many of us, we hear the summons to be soldiers, and our hearts long to shrink back. And so we need your help. love to give it.

And so grant us your grace, that we would let your great defeat of Satan shape our lives, and indeed our fears.

Teach us to trust you wholeheartedly. Grant us steel in our spines, hands, that we as a church would truly fight the good fight of faith. Help us with these things, we pray, for we long to bring glory to your name.

Amen. Amen. Amen.