

## GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND WILLING VESSELS

### Judges

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**GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY.** God demonstrates that he will not give up on his people. Even though this is the third time they have apostatized, he deals with them in utter consist consistency. He will not allow them to do as they please. On account of his rich compassion, he will not leave them in prolonged depression. While there is a decrease in the quality of the type of individual whom he can use, he nevertheless is able to bring deliverance to his people. In fact, he uses those who in the ancient world were deemed insufficient to the task.

The entire account is deliberately constructed to emphasize the deliverance provided by Yahweh. He is the One pulling the strings, raising generals, deploying armies (even the enemy is indirectly controlled by him), dictating strategy, and effecting the victory. In the end both the narrative and the song celebrate the saving work of Yahweh. The double accounting in prose and poetry stress God's sovereignty over human events. This passage thus encourages us to perceive God's sovereignty over history and our own lives. Whether it is in his chastening, and his compassionate deliverance, and his financial provision, or in his leading and guiding decisions, God is sovereign over life, and he is at work bringing his plan to fruition.

**WILLING VESSELS.** Often God uses the weaker things of this world to confound the wise. Certainly in using Deborah to raise up Barak and in using Jael to bring down the mighty Sisera, we see examples of this. He continues to work in this manner today. He brings deliverance from unexpected sources and in unexpected manners.

When he wants to use us, we need to be willing. We may not feel adequate to the task. We may feel that because of our past, God cannot use us. We may feel ungifted in what he is calling us to do. In one way or another we feel inhibited to serve. When we as Christians do not trust God in these contexts, we lose out on the opportunity for God to work through us. We lose out on his good gifts. And worse, we may find ourselves expending all kinds of time and energy hopelessly trying to make up the difference. We want to have the assurance up front that the risk will be worth it, that we will succeed. But God has often already given the assurance in his Word and wants us to be involved so that he may work to accomplish his plan.

Deborah's willingness to be God's spokesperson in calling Barak to deliver his people illustrates the faithfulness that God is seeking. Moreover, her willingness to go with Barak after his request demonstrates her bravery in the midst of great personal danger. There is nothing in the text that indicates any warrior status or abilities on the part of Deborah. She does not fight in the battle, she only pronounces to Barak God's reassurance of victory and exhortation to engage. Hence she is no Xena. In fact, the text seems to present the opposite: She is simply a prophetess, the wife of a man named Lappidoth.

