

## Trust and Obey

The chorus of the familiar old hymn says:

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

Those words are so simple, but they communicate a very important truth: the only way to experience true joy and blessing is to trust God completely and obey Him explicitly.

In this lesson you will learn about three more of Israel's judges. When they trusted and obeyed God, they enjoyed His blessings and things turned out good. When they didn't fully trust and obey God, however, trouble inevitably followed. Read on to learn more.

**Judg. 4:1-3**      What happened after Israel's last judge died?

Do you recall the cycle described in the **Introduction to Judges** on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**? Israel repeatedly **sinned**, fell under **oppression** from a foreign enemy, and **cried** out to God for help. God then raised up a **judge** who delivered Israel from her oppressors, after which the nation enjoyed a period of **peace** and rest. After each judge died, however, the people went right back into sin, starting the cycle all over again. You will see this cycle throughout the book of Judges.

**Judg. 4:4-5**      Who judged Israel at that time?

**Deborah** lived just north of Jerusalem, in the territory belonging to the tribe of Ephraim.

**Judg. 4:6-7**      **Barak** lived in the region of Naphtali near the Sea of Galilee (about 70 miles north of Deborah). Deborah called for Barak and gave him a message from God. What was that message?

**Judg. 4:8**      What did Barak require before he would do as God said and go to war?

**Judg. 4:9**      What did Deborah say would be the result if she went with Barak?

**Judg. 4:14**      What assurance did Deborah give Barak as he went to war?

**Judg. 4:15-16**      The defeat was so devastating that **Sisera** (the enemy commander) ran away and his soldiers committed suicide.

**Judg. 4:17-20**      Sisera thought he had found a safe haven in Jael's tent, because there was peace between his people and her people (she was not an Israelite).

**Judg. 4:21-24**      What did Jael do to Sisera?

According to verse 23, who subdued the enemy?

Because of Barak's lack of faith (v. 8) Deborah told him a woman would gain credit for the victory (v. 9). We should trust and obey God by faith without putting conditions on our obedience.

Chapter 5 contains Deborah's song of rejoicing and praise to God for the great victory. The Israelites enjoyed peace for forty years (Judg. 5:31). Chapters 6 – 8 tell about the next judge, **Gideon**.

- Judg. 6:1** What did Israel do to cause the LORD to deliver them into oppression by Midian?
- Judg. 6:6-10** Israel cried out to God for help. According to verse 10, what had the Israelites disobeyed?
- Judg. 6:11-12** Who appeared to Gideon?  
This was actually a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ (see v. 14).  
What did he tell Gideon?
- Judg. 6:13** What did Gideon ask God?
- Judg. 6:14** What did the LORD tell Gideon?
- Judg. 6:15-24** Gideon asked God for a sign; the Lord gave him a sign that confirmed His call upon Gideon.
- Judg. 6:25-32** God told Gideon to destroy a pagan altar and build an altar for the Lord. Did he obey God?
- Judg. 6:33-40** Enemies gathered and Gideon prepared for battle. His faith was weak, though, so he asked God for two more signs. What were those signs?
- Judg. 7:2** Why did God want Gideon's army to be **smaller** before he fought the battle?
- Judg. 7:3** How many of Gideon's soldiers left?  
How many remained with Gideon?
- Judg. 7:4-8** God said this was still too many. How many soldiers did He let Gideon keep?

Gideon divided his force into three companies, equipping each man with a trumpet and a torch hidden in a clay pitcher.

- Judg. 7:20-22** Gideon's men surrounded and completely surprised the Midianite army. What does verse 22 say the Midianite soldiers did to one another?

In chapter 8 Gideon's men pursued and killed the fleeing enemy.

**Judg. 8:22**      What did the men of Israel want Gideon to do?

**Judg. 8:23**      Who did Gideon say should rule over Israel?

**Judg. 8:28**      How long did Israel have peace?

When Barak and Gideon trusted and obeyed God, they experienced victory. Both men, however, had times of weak faith when they doubted God. In Gideon's later years he compromised by getting involved in polygamy and immorality. As soon as he died the Israelites forgot God and returned to their sinful ways (Judg. 8:34). Chapter 9 tells us that one of Gideon's illegitimate sons killed his half-brothers and claimed to be the king of Israel. This was not God's will and resulted in more sin and death.

**Concluding Thoughts:** Trusting God completely and obeying His instructions are the **only** ways we can have happy, successful lives. When Israel's judges trusted and obeyed God, things went well for them and for their nation. When Israel sinned by trusting false gods and disobeying the Lord, they always ended up in trouble.

The same principle is true for you today. If you will take your problems to God, listen to God, obey God, and trust God, things will go well for you. If you ignore God and try to do things your own way, you are certainly headed for trouble.

Perhaps you are already in trouble because you haven't been doing things God's way. If so, admit your mistakes to God. Cry out to Him and ask for His help. Turn from your sin of idolatry (doing things your way rather than God's way) and begin obeying God right now. Obey God in the things you already know to do and then commit to obey Him in other things He will show you in the future. Admit your utter dependence on the Lord. Turn to Him now.

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**Project:** Obey God in every way this week. Attend Sunday School and Worship so you can learn more about God's will for your life.