

Judges 4

Verses 1 - 3

**Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, after Ehud died.
² And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; and the commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-hagoyim. ³ The sons of Israel cried to the Lord; for he had nine hundred iron chariots, and he oppressed the sons of Israel severely for twenty years.**

Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, after Ehud died.

This is the 4th time we have seen this phrase in the Book of Judges.

See 2:11, 3:7, 3:12 and here.

¹¹ Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD

⁷ So the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD

¹² Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD.

² And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; and the commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-hagoyim.

We see again that The Lord handed Israel over to a pagan nation because of their sin.

200 years earlier, Joshua defeated a king of Hazor that was named Jabin.

See Joshua 11.1

Obviously, that Jabin was not the same Jabin that we hear of here in Judges 4.

He may have been another king bearing the same name or Jabin is a dynastic designation for any king of Hazor.

This King reigned in the northern part of Israel.

See map 405



³ The sons of Israel cried to the Lord; for he had nine hundred iron chariots, and he oppressed the sons of Israel severely for twenty years.

See timeline 410

Chapter	Event/Leader	Time	Oppressed	Peace
1	Taking Canaan	1375		
2	A new generation	1375 - 1350		
3	Othniel	1350 - 1302	8	40
3	Ehud	1302 - 1204	18	80
3	Shamgar			
4 - 5	Deborah	1204 - 1144	20	40

Verses 4 - 10

⁴ Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. ⁵ She used to sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the sons of Israel came up to her for judgment. ⁶ Now she sent and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-naphtali, and said to him, “Behold, the Lord, the God of Israel, has commanded, ‘Go and march to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun. ⁷ I will draw out to you Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his many *troops* to the river Kishon, and I will give him into your hand.’” ⁸ Then Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.” ⁹ She said, “I will surely go with you; nevertheless, the honor shall not be yours on the journey that you are about to take, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hands of a woman.” Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. ¹⁰ Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali together to Kedesh, and ten thousand men went up with him; Deborah also went up with him.

⁴ Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time.

Judge #4 DEBORAH 1204 – 1144 BC

Deborah is clearly the inspired leader here for the following reasons:

1. Her authority as a judge was recognized in Israel.
2. She received the message from God and told Barak.
3. Note her authority to summon Barak and his immediate response.

Nothing is said in this chapter that would indicate that Barak was also a judge unless one considers the fact that Barak led the army in the battle with Sisera. This was often one of the duties of a judge.

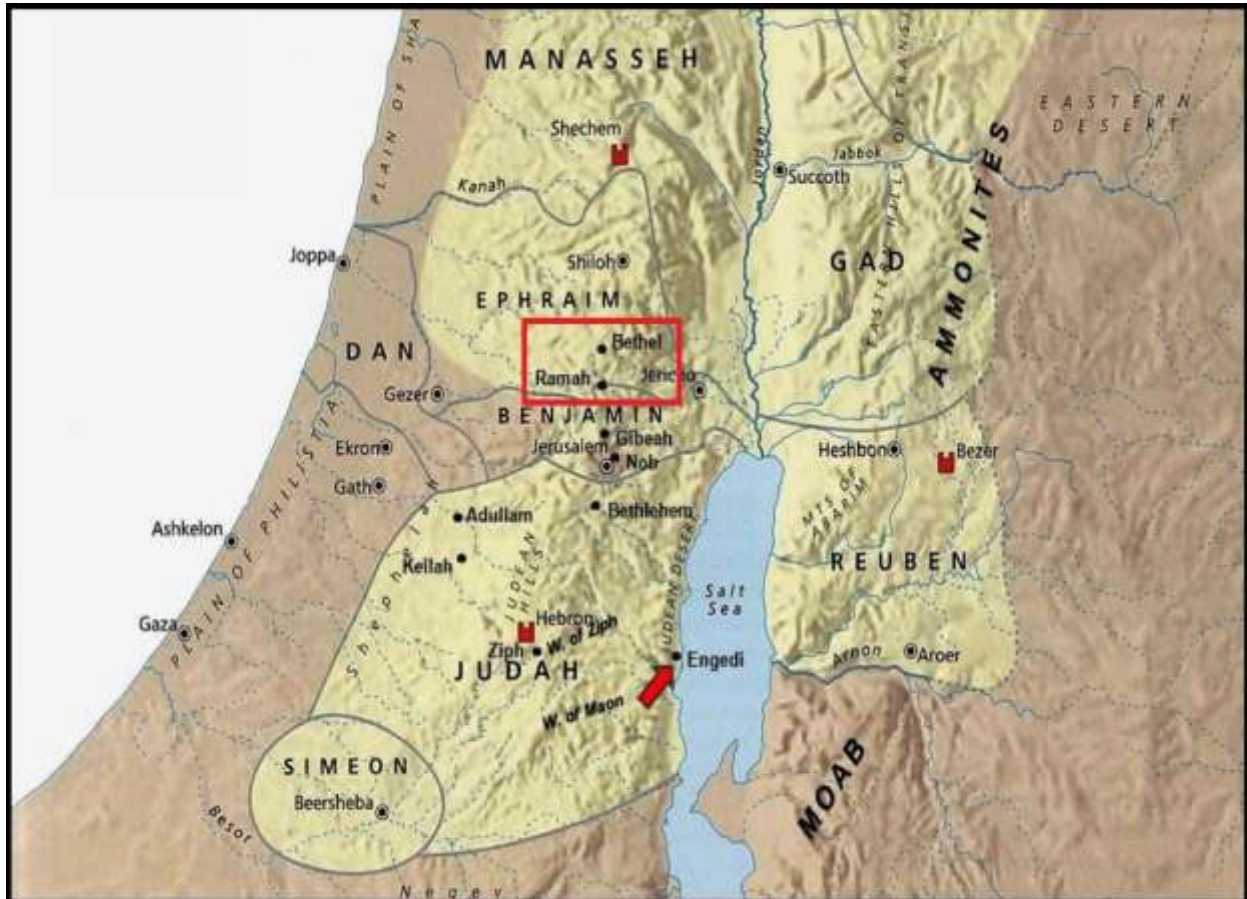
However, in Hebrews 11:32 Barak is listed along with several other judges.

Therefore, it seems like he should be considered a judge that worked in concert with Deborah.

⁵ **She used to sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the sons of Israel came up to her for judgment.**

Deborah's judgeship was exercised in the hill-country of Ephraim.

See map 415



Ramah was on the border of Benjamin & Ephraim and Bethel was several miles north so this was in the southern part of Ephraim

⁶ **Now she sent and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-naphtali, and said to him, “Behold, the Lord, the God of Israel, has commanded, ‘Go and march to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun.’**

Mount Tabor is southwest of The Sea of Galilee.

See maps 420



In this chapter only two tribes are participating in the battle. In the next chapter, 5 ½ tribes will take part in the battle.

Because of this some commentators suggest that there were two phases to the campaign:

However, there is no need to suggest another phase to this campaign because it is not unusual for us to be told additional facts as an event unfolds or even long after an event has taken place. And sometimes in a different book of the bible.

7 I will draw out to you Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his many troops to the river Kishon, and I will give him into your hand.

God is directing the show and He will bring the victory.

⁸ Then Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.”

¹⁰ Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali together to Kedesh, and ten thousand men went up with him; Deborah also went up with him.

Barak had 10,000 men to fight in this battle but he saw the presence of Deborah as the essential element to victory.

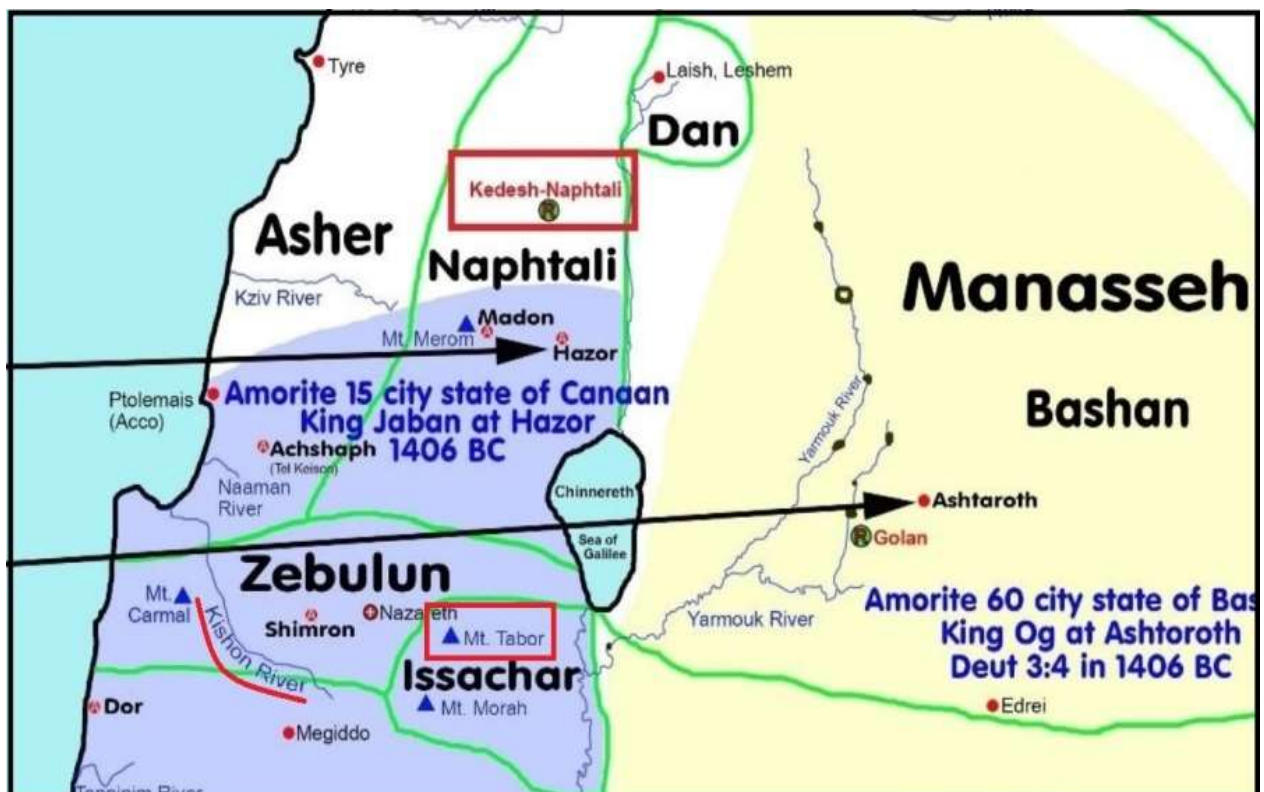
Verse 11

¹¹ Now Heber the Kenite had separated himself from the Kenites, from the sons of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far away as the oak in Zaanannim, which is near Kedesh.

Jethro (also known as Hobab) was the father-in-law of Moses. They were Midianites by ancestry but were also known as Kenites based on their place of residence.

Heber the Kenite lived near Kedesh which was some distance away from his relatives who lived near the Dead Sea.

See map 425



Verses 12 - 16

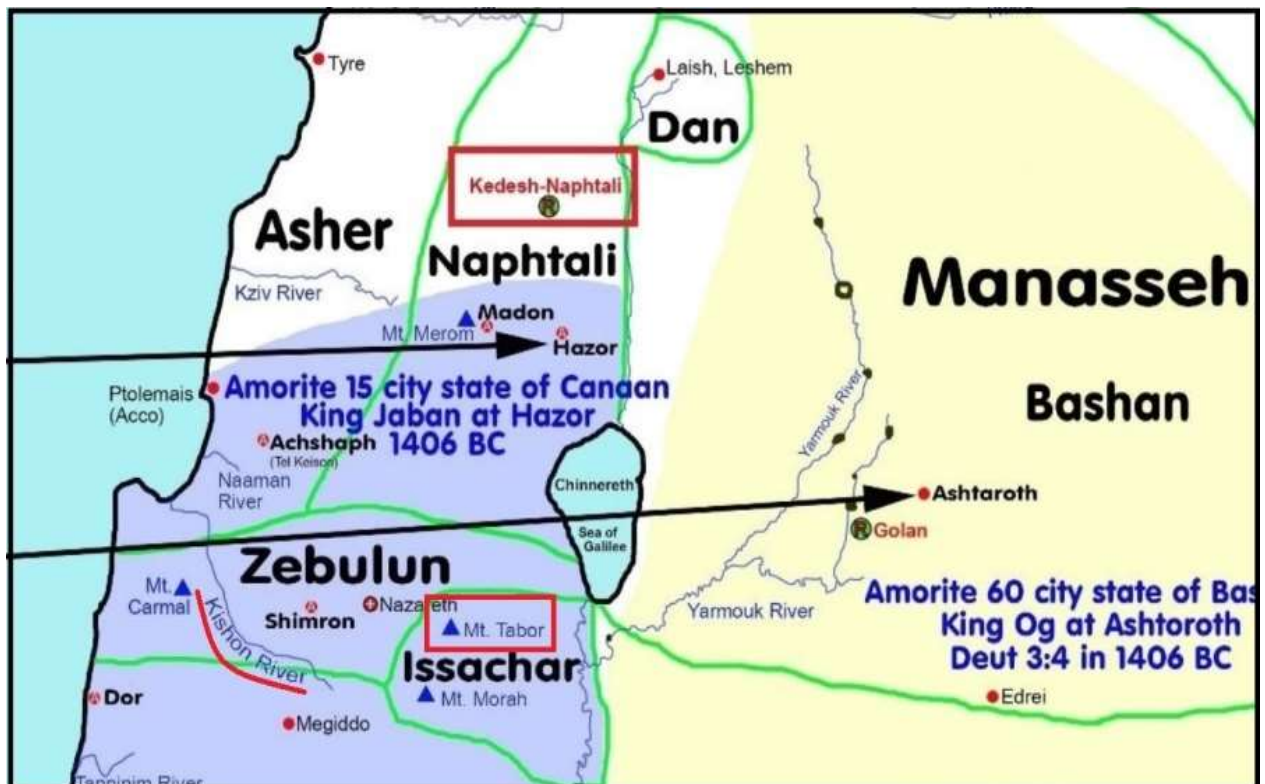
¹² Then they told Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. ¹³ Sisera called together all his chariots, nine hundred iron chariots, and all the people who were with him, from Harosheth-hagoyim to the river Kishon.

¹⁴ Deborah said to Barak, “Arise! For this is the day in which the Lord has given Sisera into your hands; behold, the Lord has gone out before you.” So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. ¹⁵ The Lord routed Sisera and all *his* chariots and all *his* army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from *his* chariot and fled away on foot. ¹⁶ But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth-hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not even one was left.

¹² Then they told Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. ¹³ Sisera called together all his chariots, nine hundred iron chariots, and all the people who were with him, from Harosheth-hagoyim to the river Kishon.

Barak and Deborah had gone to Mount Tabor so Sisera took his 900 chariots to the Kishon River which is west of Mount Tabor.

See map 425 again



¹⁴ Deborah said to Barak, “Arise! For this is the day in which the Lord has given Sisera into your hands; behold, the Lord has gone out before you.” So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. ¹⁵ The Lord routed Sisera and all *his* chariots and all *his* army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from *his* chariot and fled away on foot.

This Kishon River remains dry except during the rainy season. If it had been the rainy season, Sisera would not have deployed his chariots.

But a timely rain made the Kishon a roaring river that flooded the plains in that area. Obviously, God sent the timely rain and gave Israel the advantage. We learn about this in the song of Deborah & Barak in chapter 5.

Barak rushed down the steep slopes of Tabor and cut down Sisera's entire force. Sisera left his chariot and fled away on foot.

Verses 17 - 22

¹⁷ Now Sisera fled away on foot to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite, for *there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.* ¹⁸ Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, “Turn aside, my master, turn aside to me! Do not be afraid.” And he turned aside to her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug. ¹⁹ He said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.” So she opened a bottle of milk and gave him a drink; then she covered him. ²⁰ He said to her, “Stand in the doorway of the tent, and it shall be if anyone comes and inquires of you, and says, ‘Is there anyone here?’ that you shall say, ‘No.’” ²¹ But Jael, Heber’s wife, took a tent peg and seized a hammer in her hand, and went secretly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went through into the ground; for he was sound asleep and exhausted. So he died. ²² And behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him and said to him, “Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking.” And he entered with her, and behold Sisera was lying dead with the tent peg in his temple.

¹⁷ Now Sisera fled away on foot to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite, for *there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.*

Heber must have been a man of some influence since his house had an agreement with the King of Hazor.

²⁰ He said to her, “Stand in the doorway of the tent, and it shall be if anyone comes and inquires of you, and says, ‘Is there anyone here?’ that you shall say, ‘No

The king wanted Jael to protect him from any of Barak’s men that were looking for him.

²¹ But Jael, Heber’s wife, took a tent peg and seized a hammer in her hand, and went secretly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went through into the ground; for he was sound asleep and exhausted.

Heber had made a treaty between his family and the King but it seems his wife did not agree with his politics. She decided to veto that decision by killing the king.

This may be how she earned the nickname Peggy Sue. 😊

²² And behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him and said to him, “Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking.” And he entered with her, and behold Sisera was lying dead with the tent peg in his temple.

In chapter 5 Deborah calls Jael “most blessed of women”. Her role in killing the king is praised by a woman who was a judge and prophetess of Israel.

Verses 23 - 24

²³ So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the sons of Israel.

²⁴ The hand of the sons of Israel pressed heavier and heavier upon Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin the king of Canaan.

Some commentators believe that this indicates that there was more to this war than just this single battle.

However, the evidence for that is slim. But this matter will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.