

## 14.09 Fourth Judge – Deborah (Judges 4; 5)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- NOTE: Print for each student a copy of the highlighted page of Judges 4 and of the black-and-white map found at the end of this lesson. (The other maps are for your information.) If the teacher follows the suggestion of having students read the text and highlight the locations, students will need to sit at a table or have clipboards. Adapt, *e.g.*, by reading the text or simplifying it, for non-readers. These students will probably not be able to do the highlighting unless helped by an older student.
- The Beka Flash-a-Card story from the series, “Judges,” has good pictures. You might also use old CEF flannelgraph figures. Excellent free pictures online may be found at [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Media\\_contributed\\_by\\_the\\_Sweet\\_Publishing](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Media_contributed_by_the_Sweet_Publishing).
- Highlighters
- A tent peg or a very long nail

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *Kenites*: descendants of Hobab, Moses’ father-in-law, who came to the Promised Land with Israel
- *prophet/prophetess*: someone who tells people what God will do and what He wants them to do; the *-ess* indicates a woman

### Scripture: (ESV)

Judges 4:1 And the people of Israel again did what was 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**. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in **Harosheth-hagoyim**. 3 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 twenty years.

4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. 5 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. 6 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**. 7 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’?” 8 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.” 9 And she said, “I will surely go with you. Nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.” Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to **Kedesh**. 10 And Barak called out **Zebulun** and **Naphtali** to **Kedesh**. And 10,000 men went up at his heels, and Deborah went up with him.

11 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 Zaanannim, which is **near Kedesh**.

12 When Sisera was told that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to **Mount Tabor**, 13 Sisera called out all his chariots, 900 chariots of iron, and all the men who were with him, from **Harosheth-hagoyim to the river Kishon**. 14 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. 15 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. 16 And Barak pursued the chariots and the army to **Harosheth-hagoyim**, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.

17 But Sisera fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite [probably located at **Kedesh**], for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. 18 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. 19 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. 20 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.’” 21 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. 22 And behold, as Barak was pursuing Sisera, Jael went out to meet him and said to him, “Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking.” So he went in to her tent, and there lay Sisera dead, with the tent peg in his temple.

23 So on that day God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the people of Israel. 24 And the hand of the people of Israel pressed harder and harder against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

5:1 Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day:

2 “That the leaders took the lead in Israel, that the people offered themselves willingly, bless the Lord!

3 “Hear, O kings; give ear, O princes; to the Lord I will sing; I will make melody to the Lord, the God of Israel.

4 “Lord, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the region of Edom, the earth trembled and the heavens dropped, yes, the clouds dropped water. 5 The mountains quaked before the Lord, even Sinai before the Lord, the God of Israel.

6 “In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were abandoned, and travelers kept to the byways. 7 The villagers ceased in Israel; they ceased to be until I arose; I, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel. 8 When new gods were chosen, then war was in the gates. Was shield or spear to be seen among forty thousand in Israel? 9 My heart goes out to the commanders of Israel who offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless the Lord.

10 “Tell of it, you who ride on white donkeys, you who sit on rich carpets and you who walk by the way. 11 To the sound of musicians at the watering places, there they repeat the righteous triumphs of the Lord, the righteous triumphs of his villagers in Israel. “Then down to the gates marched the people of the Lord.

12 “Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, break out in a song! Arise, Barak, lead away your captives, O son of Abinoam. 13 Then down marched the remnant of the noble; the people of the Lord marched down for me against the mighty. 14 From Ephraim their root they marched down into the valley, following you, Benjamin, with your kinsmen; from Machir marched down the commanders, and from Zebulun those who bear the lieutenant’s staff; 15 the princes of Issachar came with Deborah, and Issachar faithful to Barak; into the valley they rushed at his heels. Among the clans of Reuben there were great searchings of heart. 16 Why did you sit still among the sheepfolds, to hear the whistling for the flocks? Among the clans of Reuben there were great searchings of heart. 17 Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan; and Dan, why did he stay with the ships? Asher sat still at the coast of the sea, staying by his landings. 18 Zebulun is a people who risked their lives to the death; Naphtali, too, on the heights of the field.

19 “The kings came, they fought; then fought the kings of Canaan, at Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo; they got no spoils of silver. 20 From heaven the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera. 21 The torrent Kishon swept them away, the ancient torrent, the torrent Kishon. March on, my soul, with might!

22 “Then loud beat the horses’ hoofs with the galloping, galloping of his steeds.

23 “Curse Meroz, says the angel of the Lord, curse its inhabitants thoroughly, because they did not come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

24 “Most blessed of women be Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, of tent-dwelling women most blessed. 25 He asked for water and she gave him milk; she brought him curds in a noble’s bowl. 26 She sent her hand to the tent peg and her right hand to the workmen’s mallet; she struck Sisera; she crushed his head; she shattered and pierced his temple. 27 Between her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still; between her feet he sank, he fell; where he sank, there he fell—dead.

28 “Out of the window she peered, the mother of Sisera wailed through the lattice: ‘Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the hoofbeats of his chariots?’ 29 Her wisest princesses answer, indeed, she answers herself, 30 ‘Have they not found and divided the spoil?—A womb or two for every man; spoil of dyed materials for Sisera, spoil of dyed materials embroidered, two pieces of dyed work embroidered for the neck as spoil?’

31 “So may all your enemies perish, O Lord! But your friends be like the sun as he rises in his might.” And the land had rest for forty years.

### **Introduction/Review:**

Today, you will be more involved in our lesson. I will let you read Judges 4:1–20. Frequently, I will stop to ask you questions. In addition, on a map we will highlight places that we find in this passage of Scripture. [Hand out the Judges 4 text found on a separate page below as well as the black-and-white maps.]

Othniel, the first judge, had fought against the king of Mesopotamia in the northern part of Israel [locate and have students find locations throughout the story]. Ehud had fought against Moab in the southern area of Israel near the Dead Sea [locate]. Shamgar, the third judge, fought against Philistia to the west of Israel [locate].

### **Story:**

The battles of today’s lesson were fought again in the northern part of Israel [locate].

The judge who helped the people in today’s story was different from all the other judges. I will ask you at the end of the lesson how this judge was different.

I am giving you a copy of the Scripture for today’s lesson, a map, and a highlighter. You will read the Scripture, and we will stop after nearly every verse to highlight the places spoken of in the chapter and to ask questions about the story.

[Teacher, stop at the end of each verse that gives a location. Also, stop the reading at various points in order to check comprehension. An answer key is found at the end of the lesson. The following verses are suggested stopping points:]

v. 1 – What had Israel done again? [They had done evil in the sight of the Lord by false worship.]

v. 2 – Who was the king of Canaan, and who was his commander? [Jabin; Sisera; locate and highlight their cities.] Notice that Jabin—which was probably a title, like *Pharaoh*—was king of Canaan. This was not a foreign country but, rather, people who had already been living in the land and had not been conquered. If you note the large distance between the cities of the king and his commander (if the cities are correctly located), you will see Canaan had dominated quite a bit of land that Israel should have conquered.

v. 3 – How long had Jabin cruelly subdued Israel? [20 years.]

v. 3 – What kind of war gear did Canaan have? [900 iron chariots.]

v. 3 – Why did Israel cry out to God for help? [They had been cruelly oppressed 20 years, and the enemy was strong, having 900 iron chariots.]

vv. 4, 5 – Who was the prophetess judging Israel at this time? [Deborah.]

vv. 4, 5 – Describe Deborah, the place of her judging, and her work. [She sat under a palm tree; people came from all over Israel to have her judge matters; she lived in the hill country of Ephraim between Ramah and Bethel.]

v. 6 – Whom did Deborah summon to fight against Canaan? [Barak, pronounced “BAIR uck.”]

v. 6 – Who had commanded Barak to go? [God.]

v. 6 – Where was Barak to gather soldiers? [At Mount Tabor.]

v. 6 – How many men was Barak to gather? [10,000 men.]

v. 6 – From what tribes was Barak to gather his 10,000 men? [Naphtali and Zebulun.] We learn later that the tribe of Issachar also took part in the battle (Judges 5:15). Deborah later spoke, however, of tribes in the area who did *not* come to help: Gilead [locate on the eastern side of the Jordan]; Reuben, Dan; Asher (Judges 5:15, 17).

v. 7 – Who gave the battle plan? [God.]

v. 8 – Under what condition did Barak say he would go? [Only if Deborah went with him.]

v. 9 – What did Deborah say would happen if she went with Barak? [A woman would get the glory for the victory.]

[Stop to locate places after vv. 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. They have already been highlighted, but students may review their names and positions.]

v. 15 – What happened in this war? [The Lord routed Sisera, his chariots, and all his army.]

v. 15 – What happened to Sisera? [He escaped on foot.]

v. 17 – To what specific place did Sisera escape? [To the tent of Jael.]

vv. 18-20 – How did Jael treat Sisera kindly? Give examples. [She offered her tent for protection; encouraged him not to be afraid; covered him; gave him milk instead of water.]

[Teacher, do not read past verse 20 if you have younger students.]

Exhausted and satisfied with the milk Jael had given him, Sisera fell fast asleep. Very quietly, Jael approached Sisera and slew him. At about this time, Barak, who had been pursuing Sisera, arrived at Jael’s tent. Jael went out to meet him and said, “Come. I will show you the man whom you are seeking.”

When Barak entered her tent, he saw Sisera lying there dead.

This was a great day of victory because the commander of Jabin’s army could no longer lead his soldiers with their iron chariots. However, King Jabin still resisted. Israel continued to push back against him until they finally destroyed him. The people had rest from their enemies forty years.

Again, it was God who gave victory; Judges 5:20 and 21 state, “From heaven the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera. The torrent Kishon swept them away, the ancient torrent, the torrent Kishon.” It appears from verse 21 that the River Kishon, near which they battled, claimed the lives of many enemy soldiers.\* Judges 4:23 states very clearly, “So on that day *God* subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the people of Israel.”

Now, we asked at the beginning of this lesson how this judge was different from all the other judges? [Give students a moment to answer.] If you say she was the only judge who was a woman, you are right. Even though Barak did the fighting, he did it under Deborah’s direction. She is the judge who delivered Israel from Canaan, and Jael’s destruction of Sisera ended the war. God gave peace to the land forty years.

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\*“... very probably many of them, in their confusion, endeavoured to make their escape by fording or swimming over the river, by which they were swept away and drowned, the waters of it at this time swelling in a miraculous manner, as Ben Gersom thinks; or were increased by the large showers of rain that fell, as some note from Josephus, though I find it not in him; however it is not improbable it might be the case; for our countryman Mr. Maundrell thus observed when he was at it; ‘in the condition we saw it, its waters were low and inconsiderable; but passing along the side of the plain, we discovered the track of many lesser torrents falling down into it from the mountains, which must needs make it swell exceedingly upon sudden rains, as doubtless it actually did at the destruction of Sisera's host” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/judges-5-21.html>).

### Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:

One verse, Judges 5:23, in our story mentions the “angel of the Lord.” In the Old Testament this term refers to Jesus Christ before His incarnation—before His coming to earth as a human.

### Activities:

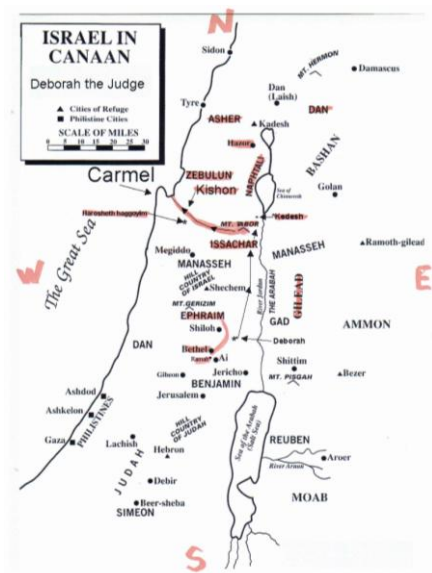
- Play dough: tent; rug; milk bottle; (tent peg)
- Snack: Milk or, if possible, a milk shake or smoothie
- Discuss how Deborah was a prophetess who prophesied events that actually and accurately came to pass. She prophesied that a woman would get the glory for Barak’s victory, and she prophesied the very day on which the victory would be won.
- Review questions: (Game: No questions this time unless the teacher uses the questions already given above. In that case, a student who answers a question correctly may cover his/her lap with a small rug.)

### Memory Verse[s]: (ESV)

- Judges 5:31: “So may all your enemies perish, O Lord! But your friends be like the sun as he rises in his might.”

### Handwork:

- See <https://childrensbiblelessons.blogspot.com/2014/06/lesson-deborah-female-prophet-song.html> for a craft showing Deborah under a palm tree. A song listing the fifteen judges of Israel may also be found at this site.



**Kenites**

**prophet or prophetess**

## Scripture—Judges 4

4:1 And the people of Israel again did what was 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**. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in **Harosheth-hagoyim**. 3 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 twenty years.

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[If teaching young children, stop the reading here and follow the teacher’s script above.] 21 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. 22 And behold, as Barak was pursuing Sisera, Jael went out to meet him and said to him, “Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking.” So he went in to her tent, and there lay Sisera dead, with the tent peg in his temple.

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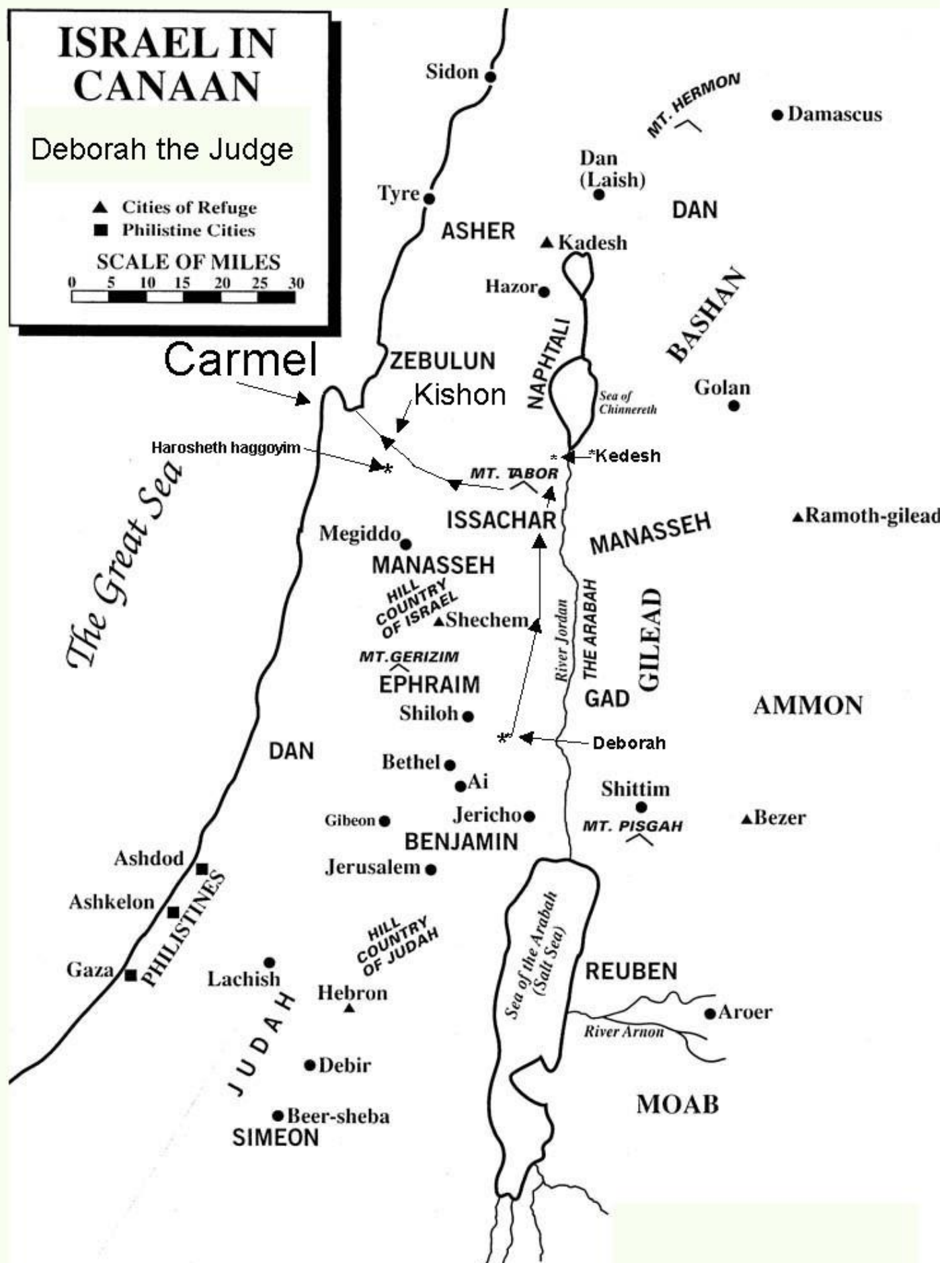
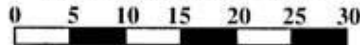


# ISRAEL IN CANAAN

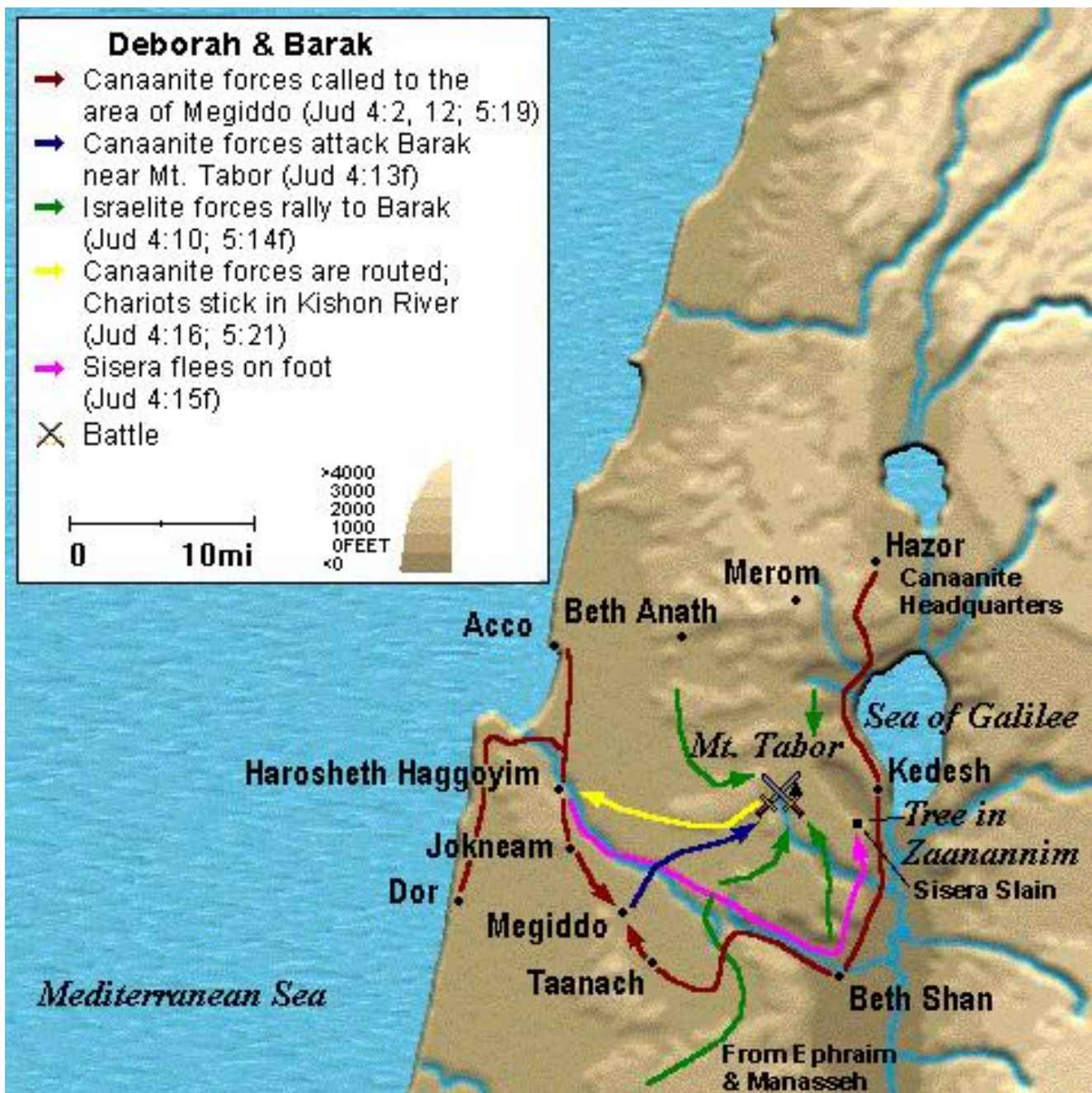
Deborah the Judge

- ▲ Cities of Refuge
- Philistine Cities

SCALE OF MILES



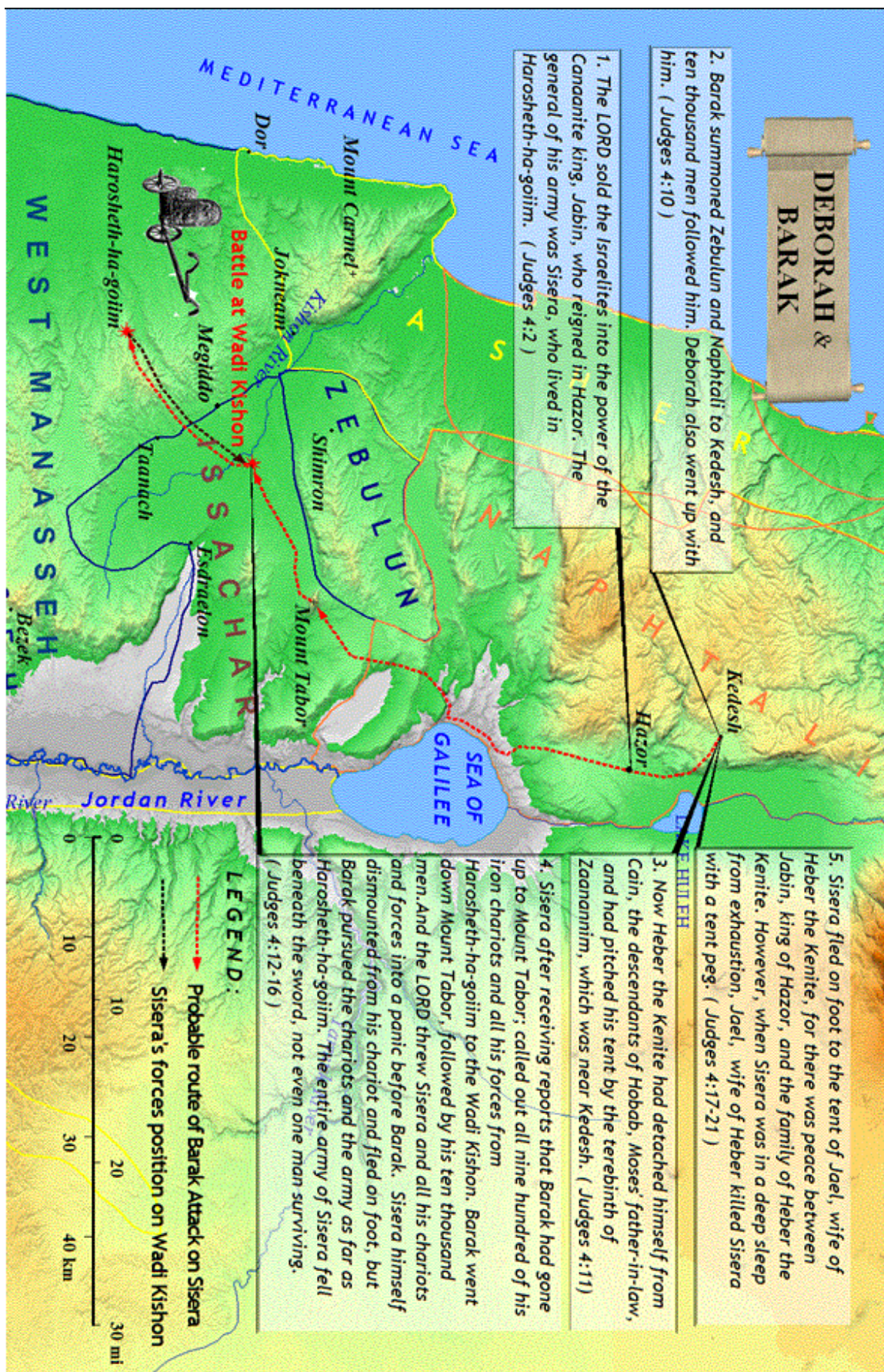




Deborah judged near Bethel, south of the boundaries of this map.

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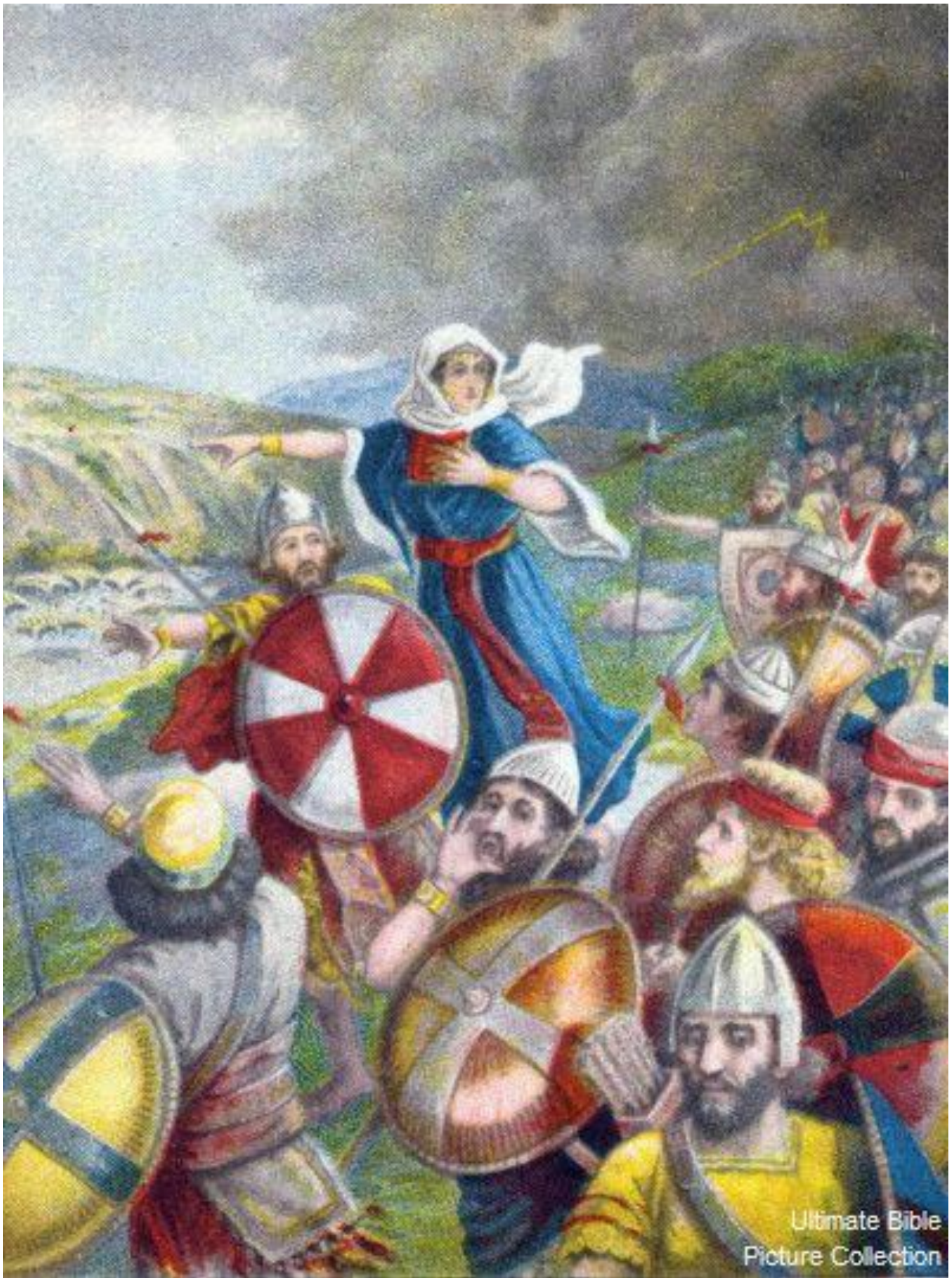


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Mount Tabor (unknown source)







(unknown source)





Orientalism in Art - The Definitive Collection

courtesy of [www.orientalism-in-art.org](http://www.orientalism-in-art.org)

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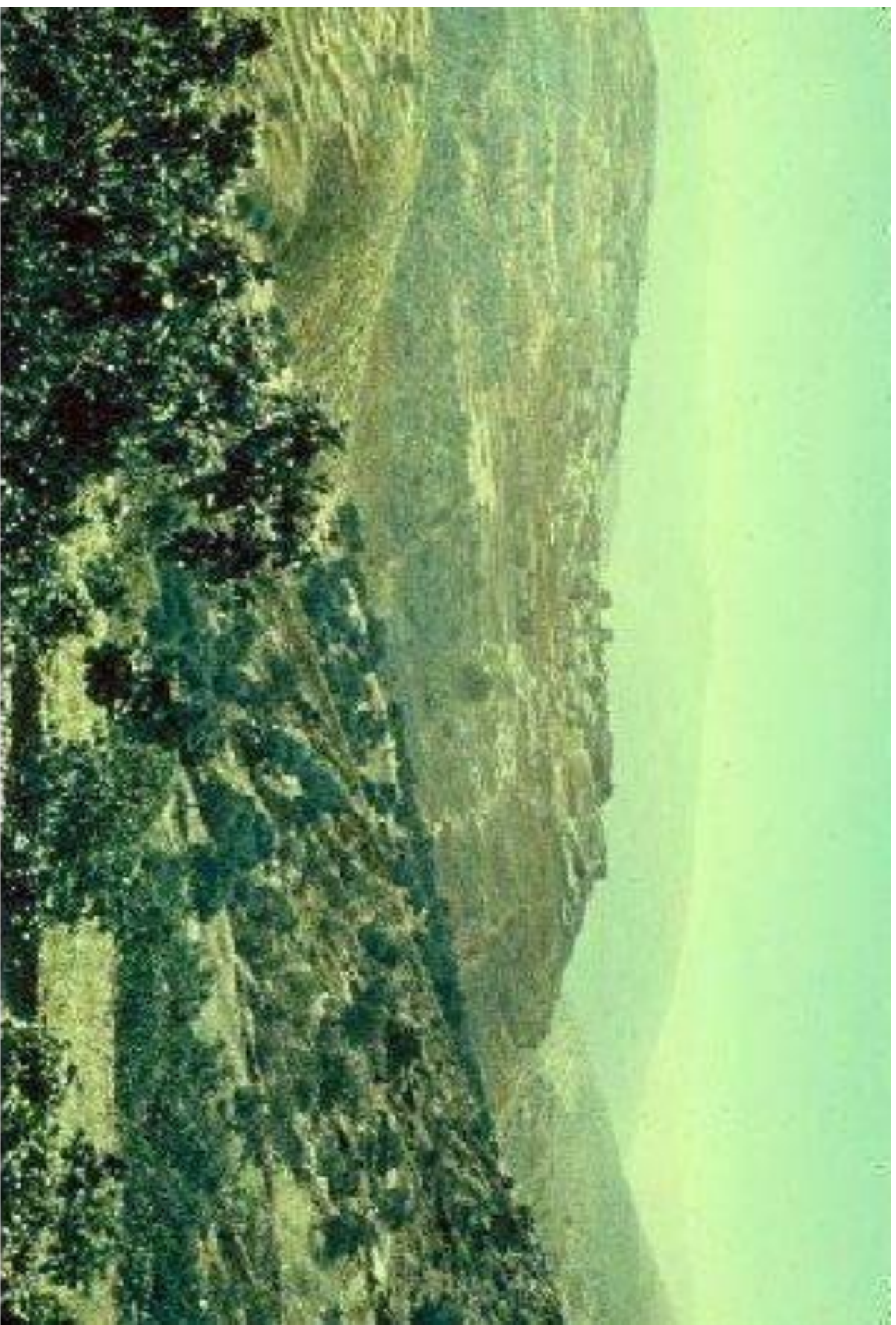




<https://mylordkatie.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/jael-and-sisera.jpg?w=230&h=300>







"The Hill-Country of Ephraim"

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