

Judges 4

Judges 4:1–24

Deborah and Barak

Outline of Chapter 4:

- vv. 1–3 Israel is oppressed by Jabin, a king of the Canaanites
- vv. 4–10 Deborah calls for Barak; they go out to war against the Canaanites
- vv. 11–12 Heber the Kenite
- vv. 13–16 The battle between Barak and Sisera
- vv. 17–22 Jael, the wife of Heber, kills Sisera
- vv. 23–24 Israel is victorious over Jabin

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Doctrines Covered		Doctrines Alluded To	
Responsibilities and the Requirements of the Judges of Israel		Three Kedesh's	Kenites

Introduction: Judges 4 takes place after the death of Ehud and introduces, Deborah, one of the very few female leaders to be found in the Bible. In fact, not only is she a judge, but she is also a prophetess, which is, in general, a true rarity in Scripture. Barak was to be the man of the hour, but he had to be led and guided by Deborah. The

two villains in this chapter are Jabin, a king of the Canaanites, and Sisera, who was the commander-in-chief of Jabin's army. Israel, at least northern Israel, is in subjection to Jabin and Sisera, and Deborah and Barak will lead Israel in war against the Canaanites. This is the general subject matter of the next two chapters of the book of Judges. Judges 4 is an historical account; and Judges 5 is a poetic account.

This chapter begins again the pattern established in the previous chapter: Israel does evil in the sight of God, and God allows a non-Jewish ruler (Jabin, king of the Canaanites) to oppress them for 20 years (vv. 1–3). Deborah, one of the few legitimate prophetesses in the Bible, calls upon Barak to lead Israel out of slavery (vv. 4–7). Barak agrees to this, only if Deborah will go up with him to war (v. 8). Deborah agrees, but warns Barak that he will receive limited glory for his actions (v. 9). Barak gathers men from Zebulun and Naphtali and they will gather and defeat Jabin and his general Sisera (vv. 10, 12–16). Sisera will escape the battle on foot and go to neutral territory (vv. 11, 17). He will be met by a woman, Jael, who encourages him to come into her tent to rest and hide out (vv. 18–19). Sisera instructs her to stand guard while he apparently falls asleep; and once he is asleep, she kills Sisera (vv. 20–21). By this time, Barak arrives, and Jael leads him to Sisera dying (v. 22). This chapter is summarized in vv. 23–24.

I always like to throw in someone else's outline of a chapter:

Matthew Henry Outlines Judges 4

The method of the history of Deborah and Barak (the heroes in this chapter) is the same with that before:

- I. Israel revolted from God (Judges 4:1).
- II. Israel oppressed by Jabin (Judges 4:2–3).
- III. Israel judged by Deborah (Judges 4:4–5).
- IV. Israel rescued out of the hands of Jabin.
 1. Their deliverance is concerted between Deborah and Barak (Judges 4:6, 9).
 2. It is accomplished by their joint-agency.
 - Barak takes the field (Judges 4:10). Sisera, Jabin's general, meets him (Judges 4:12–13).
 - Deborah encourages him (Judges 4:14).
 - God gives him a complete victory. The army routed (Judges 4:15–16). The general forced to flee (Judges 4:17).
 - Where Sisera expected shelter he had his life stolen from him by Jael while he was asleep (Judges 4:18–21), which completes Barak's triumph (Judges 4:22).
 - Israel's deliverance (Judges 4:23–24).

Taken from Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4 introduction. Slightly edited.

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We can guess at the time period that this battle takes place. Megiddo was completely destroyed in the middle of the 12th century and uninhabited until about 1100 B.C. The subsequent inhabitants appear to be Israelites. Megiddo is never mentioned as a city in this chapter or the next, although the *waters of Megiddo* will be mentioned in Judges 5:19. This suggests that there is no city of Megiddo (otherwise, the battle would have taken place [at Taanach near Megiddo](#), rather than [at Taanach near the waters of Megiddo](#)). Archeological evidence indicates that Taanach and Megiddo were but five miles apart, but not simultaneously occupied, as does the Biblical record. ZPEB tells us: *The convergence of historical, archeological, and literary evidence has made a date c. 1125 B.C. virtually certain.*¹ This places the dates given in *The Narrated Bible*, which I lean upon for a rough outline of time, about a century off (they give a date of 1224 B.C.).

¹ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 740.

The geography of this is problematic for some—but only for those who have an incomplete understanding of the geography. We have the city of Kedesh-Naphtali mentioned in v. 6, which is where Barak is from. Then, throughout this narrative, we have mention of the city of Kedesh. Now, Kedesh-Naphtali is in north central Naphtali, 20 miles north of the Sea of Chinnereth (later known as the Sea of Galilee) in the foothills of Mount Naphtali. However, we continually hear about this Kedesh which appears to be near the River Kishon, which is southwest of the Sea of Chinnereth. No way are these *Kedesh's* the same. You may want to refer to the **Doctrine of the Three Kedesh's** in Joshua 12:22. However, to give you a brief run-down: Barak was born in Kedesh-Naphtali, which is pretty far away from the action which takes place. There is the River Kishon, which runs between Issachar and Manasseh, near Mount Tabor, where most of the action of this and the next chapter takes place. All of this is about forty miles south of Kedesh-Naphtali. Now along the River Kishon is a city known both as Kishion and as Kedesh (compare Joshua 19:20 21:28 1Chron. 6:72).² This is the *Kedesh* referred to throughout most of this passage, which is quite different from the *Kedesh* where Barak was from. We will, near the end of this chapter, have Sisera make a running escape to the oak in Zaanannim, which is near Kedesh. Sisera's run is less than ten miles. He does not make some 40 mile run north. As long as you understand the location of these two different *Kedesh's*, then the geography of this passage makes perfect sense.

We may find this easier to follow in a table:

The Three Kedesh's		
Name	Description	Scripture
Kedesh in Judah	Grouped with cities in the far southwestern portion of Judah. Possibly equivalent to Kadesh-barnea.	Num. 20:1 Joshua 15:23
Kedesh of Issachar, by the river Kishion	Given the cities that this Kedesh is grouped with in Joshua 12, we may reasonably assume this is in Issachar. Possibly also named Kishion, due to its location near the river Kishon. It is in this general area where most of the action of Judges 4–5 takes place (however, this is not equivalent to the city Kedesh where Barak was born).	Joshua 12:22 19:20 Judges 4:11 1Chron. 6:72
Kedesh Naphtali (also known as Kedesh of Galilee)	Kedesh Naphtali is the birthplace of Barak, also mentioned in Judges 4, which is what causes no little confusion to the person with even just a smattering of geographical knowledge. This Kedesh is about 20 miles north of the Sea of Galilee, in the general geographical region known as Galilee. While the evil Pekah ruled over the Northern Kingdom, Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria came down and took several cities in the land of Naphtali, including Kedesh Naphtali (called simply <i>Kedesh</i> in this passage, as its location is pretty obvious by context).	Joshua 19:37 20:7 Judges 4:6

Because some assume that the Kedesh of Judges 4:6 and 4:11 are equivalent, they locate another Kedesh along the southwestern shore of Galilee in order to try to make geographic sense of this narrative. However, that is unnecessary.

This information is given in greater detail, with more attention to justification of the locations of these three cities.

There is a fourth Kedesh located outside the land of Palestine.

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² The Hebrew and the Greek are consistent in these passages. There is no copyist error.

Maps of the Correct and Incorrect Locations of the Various Kedesh's

Correct Locations



Incorrect Locations



From http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:1759_map_Holy_Land_and_12_Tribes.jpg and edited. I added the three Kedesh's.

From *The MacMillan Bible Atlas*; 3rd Edition; Aharoni, Avi-Yonah, Rainey, and Safrai; MacMillan; ©1993 by Carta; p. 67. Only a portion of the map is shown.

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As usual, Israel has gone through some prosperity, but, without a great national leader, has slid back into degeneracy. Now, you may wonder how such a thing could happen to a people whose history is so rich with the hand of God. There are several reasons.

How Did Israel so Easily Fall into Idolatry?

(1) Believers did not have access to God's Word as we have. In my immediate periphery, I have around twenty various English translations of God's Word and nearly a half-dozen in Greek and Hebrew. The average person had no direct contact with God's Word. The Pentateuch—as at least, the lion's portion of it—was written on some stones near Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal (Deut. 27:2–4 Joshua 8:32). So, for a few generations, if someone wanted to read the Law, they could go to that general area and read the stones. Other than that, no individual had easy access to God's Word.

(2) Secondly, believers in the Old Testament did not have the Holy Spirit as we do. When we are saved, we are baptized by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5 I Cor. 12:13) and can, by a simple confession of sin, be restored to fellowship with God (1John 1:9). Very few people in the Old Testament had the Spirit, and certainly not the hoi polloi.

How Did Israel so Easily Fall into Idolatry?

(3) Wherever God is mighty, Satan attacks. Satan did not send his demon troops to far away places—the people who were saved and who guarded God’s Word were in Israel, so that is where his headquarters is based.

(4) And most simply of all, man has an old sin nature and finds himself tempted by sin and falling into sin again and again.

The next time you wander into a church and wonder *how the hell can they teach this crap?*, recall that man has an old sin nature and Satan and his demon army is out to corrupt us in any way he can.

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It is in these differences that we can develop a better grasp of the correct understanding of the oral tradition. The mistaken understanding is that the oral tradition of the Jews preserved Scripture orally for centuries until someone decided to write it down. Part of this theory was based upon Scripture (where the Jews were told to tell their children about the great acts of God) and part of this theory was based upon faulty historical presumptions—specifically, that early man did not have the ability/means/desire to record things in writing. When it comes to truth, it is not unusual for a false idea, based upon a faulty premise, to remain, even after the faulty premise has been shown to be clearly false.³ This simple reason for this is that “...men love darkness rather than light.” (John 3:19b). Now even though we have archeological proof that very ancient men were able to record whatever they wanted to in writing, still remains the idea that early books of Scripture (like the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges and Job) were kept alive orally and finally written down much later in history than when they occurred. As we have studied these writings, this contradicts what we find recorded in the writings themselves; it defies explanation to think that men, who had the ability to write things down, chose, instead, to repeat them orally for century after century and then suddenly decide, *Hey, why not write all this stuff down?* And then his buddy cried, *Brilliant idea!* It sounds stupid, I realize, but some *scholars* hold to this idea. So, even though the faulty premise is shown to be faulty; and even though the idea is preposterous, still men hold to the idea that Scripture was written long after the fact (and, in radically different writing styles, to boot; the writing style and vocabulary of Moses and Joshua are not at all similar; the writing style and vocabulary of Judges appears to change with almost every chapter). Oh, and I forgot: this goofy concept of the oral tradition is considered to be the more scholarly view (along with the idea that several people and groups of people wrote the books of Moses after the fact). This is taught in many seminaries and carefully refuted by Josh McDowell in *More Evidence that Demands a Verdict Part Two*.

On the other hand, there was some truth to the *oral tradition* of the Jews. Even though it has been distorted into something other than what it was, there was a real *oral tradition*, and it is taught in Scripture. Because the average person did not have access to Scripture, what men observed in the deliverance of Israel at the Sea of Reeds, they were told to tell this to their sons and to their daughters (Deut. 4:5–14 6:20–25). Often, when God performed some great, seemingly supernatural act, a memorial would be set up, so that fathers would tell their sons the meaning of that memorial, so that the sons would tell their own sons (Joshua 4:1–7). Parts of the Law were to be carried on the person of a Jew, or written on the door frames, so that they would recall and then teach what is true (Deut. 6:6–9 11:18–20). Then, as now, there is nothing more important than knowing the Word of God and then teaching His Word. Recall what Moses said near the end of his life: “Take to your heart all the words with which I have warned you today, which you will command your sons to observe carefully—even all the words of this law. For it is not an idle word for you; indeed, it is your life. And by this word you will prolong your days in the land into which you are about to possess after crossing the Jordan.” (Deut. 32:44–47). In other words, the ancient Israelites taught their children about the character of God for the exact same reason that we study God’s Word today and teach it to our own children. Similarly, many fathers failed then to teach it to their children, as occurs today as well.

³ Although I don’t have any proof of this, I am convinced that part of Darwin’s original reasoning for believing in evolution is that in a rain barrel or in any open container of water, it will appear as though it is pure water; however, give it a week or two and suddenly, living things will begin to appear in it. No scientist would ever point to this occurrence today and claim that this proves evolution, as they understand the concept of microorganisms and pollution of the water; however, the ideas which stemmed from this are retained. Again, I have no proof that Darwin observed and based any of his notions on this.

One of the false assumptions is that, this historical event was kept alive by the song which follows, and that someone, much later in history, wrote out Judges 4. Keil and Delitzsch deal with this assertion: *This fresh oppression of the Israelites, and the glorious victory which they obtained over Sisera, Jabin's general, through the judge Deborah and the heroic warrior Barak, are so fully described in Deborah's triumphal song in Judg 5, that this song may be regarded as a poetical commentary upon that event. It by no means follows from this fact, however, that the historical account in Judg 4 was first of all founded upon the ode, and was merely intended to furnish an explanation of the song itself. Any such assumption is overthrown by the fact that the prose account in Judg 4, contains, as even Bertheau acknowledges, some historical details which we look for in vain in the song, and which are of great assistance in the interpretation of it.*⁴

In our lives, we have a lot fewer reasons for failure. We all have the Holy Spirit and possibly 95% of us (in the United States) have Bibles. We don't have a lot of reason for failure. Furthermore, if we desire to know God's Word, God will see to us that we are taught. Satan is certainly hard at work in the United States, however, we have overcome the evil one (Rom. 8:15 Col. 1:13a 1John 2:13)—if not in practice, then in position (Matt. 4:1–11 Rom. 8:16 Gal. 3:26 Col. 1:13–14) and by choice (1John 1:9 2:5).

With Deborah and Barak, we will see that there are two very different ways of looking at Barak. The common way people see Barak is as someone who has been told by God what to do, and then Deborah has to call him into her office and repeat what God has for him to do. That is the view which I held to for many years. However, the more that I examine this book, the more I have allowed for the possibility that the first time that Barak received direction from God was in this book at the mouth of Deborah. In any case, Barak did not show good judgment in asking Deborah to accompany him, and, for that reason, was told that his glory would be usurped by a woman (not by Deborah, but by Jael). Barak needs a woman to accompany him into battle; therefore, there is no reason that Barak should be remembered as the man who killed Sisera. This is God's sense of irony.

This chapter, written in prose, will be paralleled by Judges 5, which is written in poetry. This is possibly a *his and hers* approach to this material. In this chapter, it is difficult determining who the writer was. We have a very detailed description of Jael and Sisera, the latter of whom dies at the end of this narrative, making him an unlikely candidate to record the narrative. The account is so vivid, however, that it had to be given at least via direct interview with Jael, if not recorded by Jael herself.

We have summary verses at the beginning, very similar to a summary written throughout, indicating that whoever added to the book was aware of a format that needed to be followed; or, more likely, that all of this material was pulled together later by an editor who would put in the filler, but wrote the information which was recorded directly from the records that he had at his disposal. What I am saying is that he did very little, if any, editing, as the style of writing from chapter to chapter is so different. My guess would be that Deborah wrote this and the next chapter (or Barak wrote Judges 4), but neither of them wrote the first few verses. However, even that is a difficult call, because there does not appear to be a separation between the introduction and the historical occurrences. That is, there is no clear break in the writing style or the topic where you could say, for instance, Samuel wrote the first three verses and then copied down the history which Barak or Deborah wrote after the introduction. Our third option is that the editor is very good and wrote in such a way as to preserve a seamless effect between what he inserted and what Deborah actually wrote. Believe it or not, that can be a tougher sell, as we will have an example in the middle of Judges 20 where an additional account of the events is given, and there is no smooth transition from one account to the other. However, if Samuel pieced this together (which is the popular view), Judges 20 could have already existed as a literary unit which he was loath to change (we find verses which were added in the surrounding chapters, but not in chapter 20).

Let me explain what I mean by seamless. We begin by v. 1, which reads: **But the sons of Israel continued to do evil in the eyes of Y^howah and Ehud died.** This appears to be tied directly to the previous chapter. That is, the person who wrote it, was well-aware of the previous chapter. The next verse where the situation of the Israelites is described, where they are under the control of Jabin and Sisera, appears to be the next natural thing to say,

⁴ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Judges 4 introduction.

expounding upon the general statement of v. 1. Then we have the cry of the sons of Israel to God in v. 3, a result of the oppression of v. 2. This is a formula which we have seen Judges 3:7–8 and 3:15, and which is repeated throughout most of the book of the Judges. Such a formula would suggest a final editor who would insert these transitional verses. However, the formula is not precise—that is, it does not appear as though the author of the book of Judges actually had a set thing that he said in between the various Judges. What this suggests to me is that this book was written like the book of Genesis. Someone would write a chapter or three, put it down, and then someone from several decades later would write in another few chapters, maintaining the general outline of the book by a catch-phrase (in the book of Genesis, it was, *and these were the generations of...*). Here, the catch-phrase is, *And Israel did evil in the sight of Jehovah, and Jehovah delivered them into the hands of Bob, the electricite, and they served Bob for twenty years. Then the children of Israel cried to Jehovah and he heard their cry. So, Jehovah raised up Rex, the judge.* The more that I think about this, the more it appears as though this was written by several hands over the course of several hundred years and not necessarily by an editor who pulled the information together from various sources. What this does have, though, are implications that the book of Judges is a linearly-written book. That is, even though the episodes individually are not necessarily chronological (Judges 4 and 5 are concurrent), the overall book itself is chronological, which may cause us some dating problems. However, the styles are so different from chapter to chapter, it only seems reasonable that this is the product of several authors.

Let's summarize this information:

Authorship Summary of Judges 4 and 5

1. We find specific phrases occurring again and again in the book of Judges. This would cause us to speculate that an editor put this book together much later, drawing from first-hand accounts, and inserting commentary as he went. See Judges 3:7–8, 15 4:1–2 6:1 etc. Although, it could be that each historian was moved by God the Holy Spirit to record these similar words; this could also be the result of an editor piecing these narratives together.
2. Judges 4 gives us much more detailed information about Jael than it does about Barak; in fact, the acts of Barak are given in only the most general terms. This suggests that Jael either wrote most of this chapter or that it was written down after directly interviewing her. There are incidents in the second half of this chapter which would be known only to her and Sisera, whom she kills.
3. We do have a conversation between Barak and Deborah recorded, suggesting that one of them wrote this down. Given that Deborah is an acknowledged prophetess and that Barak was weak, yet still God's man for resisting Jabin and Sisera; I would put my money on Deborah as the author of at least the first half of Judges 4; and probably the author of Judges 5, the poetical recollection of these events.
4. Given that the second section of Judges (that which deals with the specific judges of Israel) seems to vary considerably as to content; that some portions of incidents only known to a couple of people; and given that this section still seems to be held together by the thread and Israel did evil in the sight of Jehovah; I would conclude that we have one editor (for instance, Samuel) who pieced this together from records which had been kept—many of them first-hand accounts or interviews of those who are involved in the incidents recorded.
- 5.

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The portion of the chapter where Barak and Deborah speak to one another was likely written by either one of them. The battle seems to have been written from a high vantage point rather than from being in the midst of the action. Barak's point of view in pursuing Sisera is almost non-existent. For this reason, the bulk of this chapter was probably written by Deborah, gathered in part from a report from Barak and Jael.

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Israel Is Oppressed by Jabin, a King of the Canaanites

Slavishly literal:

Moderately literal:

And so added sons of Israel to do the evil in eyes of Y^ehowah and Ehud had died.

Judges
4:1

But the sons of Israel continued to do evil in the eyes of Y^ehowah; also [lit., and] Ehud died.

Still, the people of Israel continued to do evil in the eyes of Jehovah after Ehud died.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text
Septuagint

And so added sons of Israel to do the evil in eyes of Y^ehowah and Ehud had died.
And the children of Israel continued to do evil against the Lord; and Aod was dead.

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV
The Message
REB

After the death of Ehud, the Israelites again started disobeying the LORD.
The People of Israel kept right on doing evil in GOD's sight. With Ehud dead,...
After Ehud's death the Israelites once again did what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD,...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word[™]
HCSB

After Ehud died, the people of Israel again did what the LORD considered evil.
The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD after Ehud had died.

JPS (Tanakh)

The Israelites again did what was offensive to the LORD—Ehud now being dead.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

WEB
Young's Literal Translation

The children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, when Ehud was dead.
And the sons of Israel add to do the evil thing in the eyes of Jehovah when Ehud is dead,.

What is the gist of this verse? .

Judges 4:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Judges 4:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâçaph (יָצַח) [pronounced yaw-SAHPH]	<i>to add, to augment, to increase, to multiply; to add to do = to do again; to continue to</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3254 BDB #414
bânîym (בְּנֵיִם) [pronounced baw-NEEM]	<i>sons, descendants; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Yis ^e rá ^l (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-row-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l))	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced çaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
ra ^ç (רָע) [pronounced rahç]	<i>evil, bad, wicked; evil in appearance, deformed; misery, distress, injury; that which is displeasing [disagreeable, unhappy, unfortunate, sad]</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7451 BDB #948
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
âyayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced çay-nah-YIM]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
Together, the bêyth preposition and âyin literally mean <i>in the eyes of</i> ; it can be understood to mean <i>in the opinion of, in the thinking of, in the estimation of; as _____ sees things to be.</i>			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: But the sons of Israel continued to do evil in the eyes of Y^ehowah;... As we discussed in the introduction, Israel is on this low roller coaster ride and at this point, they are at the bottom again. Their doing evil is repeated in Judges 2:11, 19 3:7, 12 6:1 10:6. As long as the evil influence of the Canaanite was in the land, Israel would continue to do evil. The parallel is simple: as long as we possess an old sin nature and as long as Satan and his minions are in the land, we will continue to do evil. Rot occurs first on the inside then it is manifested on the out. Even though the enemies throughout most of the book of Judges actually attack Israel from the outside or from border areas, this always follows Israel's internal degeneracy. In our country, there is nothing wrong with exhibiting a little paranoia when it comes to the Chinese Communists or to portions of the Russian states or to the some of various Arabic countries. But we will first fall to degeneracy within, then we will be attacked from without. We are in a period of time when we have a large number of believers, but none of them have a clue as to how to lead their lives—we're not interested in God's Word nor in the filling of the Spirit (which is not some powerful, ecstatic reaction).

Judges 4:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^é (or v ^é) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿĒhûwd (עֲהוּד) [pronounced <i>ay-HOOD</i>]	<i>I will give thanks; I will be praised; undivided, united; transliterated Ehud</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #164 BDB #13
mûwth (מוּת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i>]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

Translation: ...also [lit., and] Ehud died. The last words of this verse (which I am mentioning, because most of your Bibles read *when* or *after* the death of Ehud), are the wâw conjunction, the proper noun *Ehud*, and the Qal perfect of the verb *to die*. The perfect tense is the completed tense. What we have is that the Hiphil imperfect of the verb *to add* or *to continue* represents the action of the people which is ongoing, and Ehud's death just occurs. The two events occur perhaps around the same time but the evil committed by the sons of Israel begins before and certainly continues past the death of Ehud. It would be nice and neat to replace the wâw consecutive with *when* or *after* (*The sons of Israel continued to do evil after Ehud died*); however, the Hebrew really does not allow for that understanding. Furthermore, we even have Scriptural backing for this understanding that Israel goes awry even while their deliverer is still alive: [Then Jehovah raised up governors who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them; and yet, they did not listen to their judges, for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed themselves down to them. They turned aside quickly from the way in which their fathers had walked in obeying the commandments of Jehovah](#) (Judges 2:16–17).

We may reasonably assume that there was some spiritual revival when Ehud first delivered Israel, and that there was great enthusiasm when Moab was defeated and their king assassinated. However, after awhile, after a few decades of peace, a new generation of Israelites are born, and with much less appreciation of what God has done for them.

The United States, at this point in time, provides a remarkable parallel. In World War II, we defeated one of the greatest evil forces of the world; and thousands upon thousands of men gave their lives in this endeavor. For about two decades, American was appreciative of the peace we had won on the battlefield. Strong families, a worshiping of God, and great appreciation for what we had been given was the norm. When my generation came into its own, our appreciation waned, our spiritual life moved into idolatry, and we became all about pleasure, rather than self-discipline and self-sacrifice. I write this about 60 years after World War II, and we have become so different from that generation and so far removed. We are unappreciative, unpatriotic, not willing to sacrifice anything, even for our own sons and daughters.

As I see it, Ehud was a governor for some years after delivering Israel; but he became old; the victory over Moab became less and less memorable; that great oppression something remembered only by those who were getting old. One generation sprung up, then another after that; as Ehud became older and older. Those of his generation recalled the oppression of Eglon and may have even participated in the victory over the Moabite army; however, after 40 or 50 years, there were a significant number of people who did not know about any of this from personal experience. The next few generations had less and less appreciation for Jehovah God, for His mandates, for the land which He gave them. Therefore, they did evil in the eyes of Jehovah. Although we are not given any specifics, I think we may reasonable assume that they married women of other nations, or women of indigenous populations, and compromised their faith, worshiping other gods, falling into the idolatry which Israel had been warned against.

In the Church Age, we live in an era of historical trends, rather than an era of prophecy; an era when God works through His church, rather than through one country; yet, God's ban on idolatry continues in all ages. **There is one**

God and one mediator between man and God—the man Christ Jesus (1Tim. 2:5). “I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but by Me.” (John 14:6). We do not worship the same God that the Buddhist worship; we are not to pay homage to Mohammed; John Smith is just another man, not a prophet of God. It’s easy to see—the further we move away from our God, the worse things become.

Application: You *cannot* legislate Christianity; you *cannot* legislate faith in God. The repeated attacks against our spiritual heritage are symptomatic of our weakened spiritual state. No matter what we do legislatively or in the courts, it will make little or no difference as fewer and fewer believers understand God’s Word. As the number of believers decrease and as the number of believers who hold firm to true doctrine, our country will continue on a downhill slide, which will be reflected in our greed, our attitudes, our weak and non-existent family structure, our unwillingness to work, our unwillingness to put in any sort of effort, and in our unwillingness to put off or forgo pleasure. The World War II generation had no problem with the God of our fathers; they had no problem with singing Christmas hymns in school; if they came across the name of God in some public institution, it did not concern them. Several generations later, it is a different story. But, this did not come about because of our court system, corrupt as it is; or because of our legislature, or because of this or that president; all of this came about because of the weak spiritual condition of the believers in this land.

Application: Just as Israel was oppressed by the Moabites; just as Israel felt the shame of a foreign military on their land, we will face the same things. If you go to Lev. 26, you can see the stages of divine discipline that we potentially face. We do not solve this by getting the right person into office; by electing the right president; by appointing the best judges to our courts; this comes about by a spiritual revival—by faith in Jesus Christ first, and then true spiritual growth.

I’ve mentioned these cycles of discipline; let me give these to you:

The Five Cycles of Discipline		
Cycle	Scripture	Description
First	Lev. 26:14–17	Loss of health, decline of agriculture prosperity, terror, fear and death in combat, loss of personal freedoms due to negative volition toward Bible doctrine.
Second	Lev. 26:18–20	Economic recession and depression, increased personal and individual discipline for continued negative volition in spite of the first warning.
Third	Lev. 26:21–22	Violence and breakdown of law and order; cities are laid waste.
Fourth	Lev. 26:23–26	Military conquest and/or foreign occupation, scarcity of food (reduced to a tenth of the normal supply); and the separation of families.
Fifth	Lev. 26:27–39	Destruction of a nation due to maximum rejection of Biblical truth.

Bear in mind that these are general principles. What is described herein is a matter of degree. For instance, we have seen events which have sparked rioting, a state of lawlessness, where city blocks were destroyed. However, this does not indicate that we are in the 3rd cycle of discipline. If we saw this occur in virtually every major city in the United States, then we could reasonably confirm that we are in the 3rd cycle of discipline.

I hope that it is pretty obvious that we are not even in the first cycle of discipline, although that is not far off, given our current spiritual status.

This was taken from R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Daniel Chapters One through Six*; ©1996 by R. B. Thieme, Jr.; p. 5 (footnote).

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And so sold them Y^ehowah into a hand of Jabin, a king of Canaan who reigned in Hazor; and a commander of his army, Sisera, and he was dwelling in Harosheth-hagoiim.

Judges
4:2

Therefore, Y^ehowah sold them into the hand of Jabin, the king of Canaan who reigned in Razor. The commander of his army [was] Sisera, and he was dwelling in Harosheth-hagoiim [or, *Harosheth of the Gentiles*].

Accordingly, Jehovah sold them into the hand of Jabin, the king of Canaan, who ruled from Hazor. The commander-in-chief of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth of the Gentiles.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so sold them Y^ehowah into a hand of Jabin, a king of Canaan who reigned in Hazor; and a commander of his army, Sisera, and he was dwelling in Harosheth-hagoiim.

Septuagint And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Chanaan, who ruled in Asor; and the chief of his power was Sisara, and he dwelt in Arisoth of the Gentiles.

Significant differences: The only real difference between the Greek and Hebrew is the Greek has the word *power* instead of *army*, as does the Latin and Syriac. *Hagoiim* is a transliteration; the translation is *the Gentiles*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV So the LORD let the Canaanite King Jabin of Hazor conquer Israel. Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, lived in Harosheth-Ha-Goiim.

The Message ...GOD sold them off to Jabin king of Canaan who ruled from Hazor. Sisera, who lived in Harosheth Haggoyim, was the commander of his army.

NLT So the LORD handed them over to King Jabin of Razor, a Canaanite king. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-haggoyim.

TEV So the LORD let them be conquered by Jabin a Canaanite king who ruled in the city of Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived at Harosheth-of-the-Gentiles.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word[™] So the LORD used King Jabin of Canaan, who ruled at Hazor, to defeat them. The commander of King Jabin's army was Sisera, who lived at Harosheth Haggoyim.

HCSB So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his forces was Sisera who lived in Harosheth of the Nations.

JPS (Tanakh) And the LORD surrendered them to King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. His army commander was Sisera, whose base was Harosheth-goiim.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV 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.

LTHB And Jehovah sold them into the hand of Jabin the king of Canaan, who ruled in Hazor. And his army commander was Sisera; and he lived in Harosheth of the nations.

Young's Updated LT

And Jehovah sell them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who has reigned in Hazor, and the head of his host is Sisera, and he is dwelling in Haroshes of the Goyim.

What is the gist of this verse? .

Judges 4:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
It is typical in the Hebrew for each sentence—in fact, each thought—to begin with a wâw consecutive in the Hebrew. However, it is not necessary in an English translation to include a connective at every such juncture, as our language does not necessarily require that for successive thoughts or actions.			
mâkar (מָכַר) [pronounced <i>maw-KAHR</i>]	<i>to sell, to sell [betroth] [a daughter]; to sell [deliver over] [a people]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect; with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #4376 BDB #569
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
This combination of the bêyth preposition and <i>hand</i> literally means <i>in [the] hand of</i> ; and can be rendered <i>in the power of; by the power of; with; through, by, by means of; before, in the sight of</i> .			
Yâbîyn (יָבִין) [pronounced <i>yaw-BEEN</i>]	<i>intelligent; God [is] intelligent; whom God observes; transliterated Jabin</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #2985 BDB #108
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced <i>MEH-lek</i>]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4428 BDB #572
K ^e na'an (כְּנָעַן) [pronounced <i>k^eNAH-gahn</i>]	which possibly means <i>merchant</i> and is transliterated <i>Canaan</i>	masculine proper noun; territory	Strong's #3667 BDB #488
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
mâlak ^e (מָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>maw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to reign, to become king or queen</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4427 BDB #573

Judges 4:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Châtsôr (חֲצוֹר אוֹ חֲצוֹרָה) [pronounced khaw-SOHR]	<i>enclosure, court, settled abode, settlement, village; transliterated Hazor</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #2674 BDB #347

Translation: Therefore, Y^ehowah sold them into the hand of Jabin, the king of Canaan who reigned in Hazor. God selling Israel into the hand of their enemy is repeated throughout this book and the next and appears to apply primarily to northern Israel (Judges 2:14 3:8 6:1 I Sam. 12:9).

There is a Jabin of Hazor mentioned way back in Joshua 11:1, 10, which would indicate that Jabin is either a generic title for the king of the Canaanites (like pharaoh), or of a dynasty of the Canaanites. We studied Hazor in great detail in Joshua 11:1, noting that it had been destroyed and rebuilt 21 times over the centuries. What seems most likely is that the Israelites totally destroyed the city back in Joshua 11 and did not go back in to re-build and re-populate it (quite like Jericho). The Canaanites of northern Israel and/or north of Israel apparently moved back in, re-established Hazor, and either restored the throne of the family of Jabin, or simply kept the title, which is even more likely. Now, according to the archeological evidence, Hazor was burned to the ground circa 1400 B.C., circa 1300 B.C. and circa 1230 B.C. Now, we cannot simply add up the years of good times and bad times in this book, add them linearly, and determine the date. Joshua's attack on the land was probably the 1400 B.C. date. This attack was very likely the 1230 B.C., which fits in quite well with the time line which I set up in the introduction. It is possible that the second burning of the city is the work of Jabin, the king of Canaan. Also, bear in mind that you cannot just assume archeology is right on the money when it comes to the time frame. However, what archeological studies have determined is that Hazor was burned to the ground in 1400 B.C., which would square with Joshua 11:11–13. Then, the upper city of roughly 25 acres was occupied, while the lower city, of about 150 acres, remained unoccupied. The location of Hazor is at a strategic position overlooking a major trade route would make it a likely area for the Canaanites to repopulate themselves a century later. It is also reasonable for the chariot force to be maintained at a separate location, Harosheth hagoiim, in the Plain of Sharon.⁵

Judges 4:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
sar (סַר) [pronounced sar]	<i>chieftain, chief, ruler, official, captain, prince, leader, commander</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8269 BDB #978
tsâbâ' (צָבָא) [pronounced tsaw ^b -VAW]	<i>army, war, or warfare</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6635 DB #838

⁵ Much of the latter part of this paragraph was taken from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 747.

Judges 4:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
צִיָּצְרָא' (אָרְסִיָּצְרָא) [pronounced sees ^e -RAW]	<i>battle array</i> [according to BDB]; and is transliterated <i>Sisera</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #5516 BDB #696

Translation: [The commander of his army \[was\] Sisera,](#)...

Judges 4:2c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>he, it; himself</i> as a demonstrative pronoun: <i>that, this</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
yāshab (יָשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH ^β V]	<i>inhabiting, staying, remaining, dwelling, sitting</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Chărôsheth (חַרְשֵׁת) [pronounced <i>khuh-roh-SHETH</i>]	<i>woodland; magic drug, magic art; transliterated Harosheth</i>	proper singular noun/location	Strong's #2800 BDB #361
gôwyîm (גוֹיִם) [pronounced <i>goh-YEEM</i>]	<i>Gentiles, [Gentile] nation, people, peoples, nations</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #1471 BDB #156

Translation: [...and he was dwelling in Harosheth-hagoiim](#) [or, *Harosheth of the Gentiles*]. This is the first mention of the city of Harosheth-hagoiim. This might be properly Harosheth of the Goim (of the Gentiles).

Barnes explains the meaning of Harosheth: *The name Harosheth signifies workmanship, cutting, and carving, whether in stone or wood (Ex. xxxi. 5), and hence might be applied to the place where such works are carried on. It has been conjectured that this being a great timber district, rich in cedars and fir-trees, and near Great Zidon (Josh. xi. 8), Jabin kept a large number of oppressed Israelites at work in hewing wood, and preparing it at Harosheth for transport to Zidon; and that these woodcutters, armed with axes and hatchets, formed the soldiers of Barak's army.*⁶

Whereas the beginning of this thought is likely, the latter is pure conjecture, and would very likely have been included in Scripture if true, if only for its irony.⁷ One author of the ZPEB places it in a narrow valley *Where the*

⁶ *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 423.

⁷ Barnes also suggests that Israel served Jabin by the cutting and hauling of wood, citing that their labor under Jain was similar to the labor of Israel under Egypt of a century or so earlier. The verb *oppressed* used in Judges 4:3 is the same as the one found in Ex. 3:8.

*Kishon flows out of the Esdraelon Plain into the Plain of Acre and the Mediterranean Sea.*⁸ *The Macmillan Bible Atlas* places this further inland 2–3 miles south of Megiddo. If you are not looking at a map, you cannot appreciate that these are very different places. The suggestion of ZPEB places it about 30+ miles west of the Sea of Chinnereth and *The Macmillan Bible Atlas* places it a little less than 30 miles southwest of the Sea of Chinnereth. In other words, two of my sources place this city almost 30 miles apart. In either case, this places Hazor in Naphtali and Harosheth-hagoiim is at least 40 miles away, either in Asher, Zebulun or Manasseh. This means that the Canaanites had a serious foothold in the northern one-third of Israel. My thinking is that these two men were split up for two reasons—one, to keep out of each other's way (so that there would not be a power grab between the two of them); and secondly, to control a major portion of Israel. Rather than having control over one city and its perimeter, they have a diagonal foothold over much of the land running from Lake Huleh to where the Kishon River flows into the Mediterranean Sea. You might recall how Dan has or will conquer an area on the very northern perimeter of Israel? Quite obviously this had to occur either before or after this incident.

Sisera is quite possibly not a Canaanite himself (according to the NIV Study Bible, his name is not Canaanitish). He and Jabin will attempt to take back the land which once belonged to the Canaanites. He will actually be mentioned twice in Scripture after this, in retrospect. 1Sam. 12:9 has Samuel addressing Israel, and he says: “**But they forgot Jehovah their god, so He sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them.**” In that once verse, Samuel summed up much of the book of the Judges. The psalmist Asaph also mentions Sisera: **Deal with them as with Midian; as with Sisera–Jabin, at the torrent of Kishon.** In fact, we will likely study this psalm after Judges 5.

The difference between this chapter and most of the others in this book is that in the other chapters, Israel's attackers come from without—Aram, Naharaim, Moab, Midian and Ammon, whose primary interest was to take some of Israel's wealth. In Judges 4–5, the Canaanites who live within will up to reclaim portions of the land of Canaan.⁹

And so cried sons of Israel unto Y^ehowah because nine hundreds chariots of iron to him and he, [even] he, oppressed sons of Israel by force [or, with violence] twenty years.

Judges
4:3

Then the sons of Israel cried unto Y^ehowah because he had 900 iron chariots [lit., (there were 900 chariots of iron to him)] and he, [even] he, oppressed the sons of Israel with violence [for] twenty years.

Then the sons of Israel cried out to Jehovah because he had 900 chariots of iron; and, furthermore, he oppressed them with violence for twenty years.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so cried sons of Israel unto Y^ehowah because nine hundreds chariots of iron to him and he, [even] he, oppressed sons of Israel by force [or, with violence] twenty years.

Septuagint

And the children of Israel cried to the Lord, because nine hundred chariots of iron were to him; and he mightily oppressed Israel twenty years.

Significant differences:

The Greek inserts the verb *to be*, which is implied in the Hebrew. In both languages, the sense is, **he had 900 chariots of iron.**

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

⁸ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 451.

⁹ The Canaanites will primarily try to get a foothold back in the northern portion of the Land of Promise, which the Philistines will try to regain or maintain control in the south and coastal regions.

- CEV Jabin's army had nine hundred iron chariots, and for twenty years he made life miserable for the Israelites, until finally they begged the LORD for help.
- NLT Sisera, who had nine hundred chariots, ruthlessly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years. Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD for help.
- TEV Jabin had nine hundred iron chariots, and he ruled the people of Israel with cruelty and violence for twenty years. Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

- HCSB Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, because Jabin had 900 iron chariots, and he harshly oppressed them 20 years.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

- ESV 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.
- Young's Updated LT And the sons of Israel cry unto Jehovah, for he has nine hundred chariots of iron, and he has oppressed the sons of Israel mightily twenty years.

What is the gist of this verse? .

One of the things that you have no doubt noticed is that we are no longer spending a lot of time in the Hebrew in this chapter. The reason for that is that, although this Hebrew is not elementary (the vocabulary is varied, but not difficult), the sentence structure and the syntax is fairly simple.

Judges 4:3a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced waw]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
tsâ'âq (צָעַק) [pronounced tsaw-GAHK]	<i>to cry, to cry out, to call, to summon</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6817 BDB #858
bânîym (בְּנֵי) [pronounced baw-NEEM]	<i>sons, descendants; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Yis'ra'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-row-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
'el (אֶל) [pronounced el]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: Then the sons of Israel cried unto Y^ehowah...

Judges 4:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
têsha' (תֵּשָׁע) [pronounced <i>TĀY-shahg'</i>]	<i>nine, ninth</i>	masculine singular noun; ordinal or cardinal numeral	Strong's #8672 BDB #1077
mê'ôwth (מֵאוֹת) [pronounced <i>may-AW</i>]	<i>hundreds</i>	feminine plural numeral	Strong's #3967 BDB #547
recheb (רֶכֶב) [pronounced <i>REH-khe^bv</i>]	<i>chariot, mill-stone, rider</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7393 BDB #939
bar ^e zel (בַּרְזֶל) [pronounced <i>bâr^e-ZEL</i>]	<i>iron</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1270 BDB #137
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l'</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: ...because he had 900 iron chariots [lit., (there were) 900 chariots of iron to him]... Despite all of the battle victories of the Israelites in the book of Joshua, they had collected precious few weapons and no armored vehicles (chariots). Sisera was able to oppress them because of his elite corps of chariot warriors. However, this should not have been enough to oppress the Israelites. Recall what Moses had told them: “Why you go out to battle against your enemies and you see horses and chariots—people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them, for Jehovah your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt, is with you.” (Deut. 20:1). That the Canaanites from that general area did have chariots is confirmed by the words of Joshua. When Ephraim and West Manasseh complained that their territory was too small, Joshua told them, “You are a numerous people and you have great power; you will not have one lot, but the hill country will also be yours. For, though it is a forest, you will clear it, and to its farthest borders, it will be yours; for you will drive out the Canaanites, even though they have chariots of iron and though they are strong.” (Joshua 17:17b–18)¹⁰.

The NIV suggests that the 900 chariots are the result of a coalition, and not the chariots of only one city. Their reasoning is that *in the 15th century B.C., Pharaoh Thutmose III boasted of having captured 924 chariots at the battle of Megiddo.*¹¹ The Bible here is not claiming that there were 900 chariots from one city.

We will see in v. 10 that Barak will assemble Zebulun and Naphtali against Sisera. Given the location of the two cities of Jabin and Sisera, it is possible that Asher, West Manasseh and Issachar were also oppressed by Jabin and Sisera.

¹⁰ In fact, this verse, along with Judges 1:27–29, indicates that even apart from Jabin and Sisera, there were quite a few Canaanites spread throughout northern Israel.

¹¹ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 331.

Judges 4:3c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
lâchats (לָחַץ) [pronounced <i>law-KHAHTZ</i>]	<i>to squeeze, to press; therefore, figuratively, to oppress, to afflict</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3905 BDB #537
’êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bânîym (בָּנִים) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i>]	<i>sons, descendants; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Yis ^e râ’êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i>]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
châz ^e qâh (חַזְקָה) [pronounced <i>khawz^e-KAW</i>]	<i>strength, might, violence; force</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #2394 BDB #306

Although both BDB and Gesenius list these Strong #'s separately, the primary difference is a vowel point, which could indicate nothing more than a slight difference in regional pronunciation, rather than an actual substantive difference. The definitions given from both sources are similar enough to consider these as the same word.

With the bêyth preposition, this means *by force* or *with violence*.

’es ^e rîym (עֶשְׂרִים) [pronounced <i>ges^e-REEM</i>]	<i>twenty</i>	plural numeral adjective	Strong's #6242 BDB #797
shânâh (שָׁנָה) [pronounced <i>shaw-NAW</i>]	<i>year</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8141 BDB #1040

Translation: ...and he, [even] he, oppressed the sons of Israel with violence [for] twenty years. In describing the way Sisera oppressed the Israelites, we have the bêyth preposition and the feminine singular noun châz^eqâh (חַזְקָה) [pronounced *khawz^e-KAW*], which means *strength, might, violence*. With bêyth, this means *by force* or *with violence*. This is the same word used of Egypt over Israel back in Ex. 3:8. Strong's #2394 BDB #306.

Now might be a good time to examine (again) **Historical Parallels: The “Israel Stele.”**

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Deborah Calls for Barak; They Go out to War Against the Canaanites

And Deborah, a woman, a prophetess, a woman of Lappidoth—she was judging Israel in the time the that.

Judges
4:4

Deborah—a woman, a prophetess, [and] the wife of Lappidoth—was judging [or, governing] Israel at that time.

During that time there was a woman, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, who judged over Israel.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And Deborah, a woman, a prophetess, a woman of Lappidoth—she was judging Israel in the time the that.
Septuagint	And Debbora, a woman, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth,—she judged Israel at that time.

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Deborah the wife of Lappidoth was a prophet and a leader of Israel during those days.
NLT	Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth, was a prophet who had become a judge in Israel.
REB	At that time Deborah wife of Lappidoth, a prophetess, was judge in Israel.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word</i> [™]	Deborah, wife of Lappidoth, was a prophet. She was the judge in Israel at that time.
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Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

WEB	Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she judged Israel at that time.
Young's Updated LT	And Deborah, a woman inspired, wife of Lapidoth; she is judging Israel at that time.

What is the gist of this verse? .

Judges 4:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^ə (or v ^ə) (ו) [pronounced <i>veh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

It is typical in the Hebrew for each sentence—in fact, each thought—to begin with a wāw consecutive in the Hebrew. However, it is not necessary in an English translation to include a connective at every such juncture, as our language does not necessarily require that for successive thoughts or actions.

Judges 4:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
D ^{eb} bôwrâh (דְּבוֹרָה) [pronounced d ^{eb} -vôh-RAW],	bee; transliterated <i>Deborah</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1683 BDB #184
ʾîshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAWH]	woman, wife	feminine singular noun	Strong's #802 BDB #61
n ^{eb} bîyʾâh (נְבִיאָה) [pronounced n ^{eb} -vee-AW]	prophetess; wife of a prophet; used of true and false prophets	feminine singular noun	Strong's #5031 BDB #612
ʾîshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAWH]	woman, wife	feminine singular construct	Strong's #802 BDB #61
Lappîydôwth (לַפִּידוֹת) [pronounced lap-pee-DOHTH]	torches, lightning peels; transliterated <i>Lappidoth</i>	feminine plural, proper noun	Strong's #3941 BDB #542

Translation: *Deborah—a woman, a prophetess, [and] the wife of Lappidoth—...* Only two women in the Bible have this name: Rachel's nurse (Gen. 35:8) and Deborah of the judges (Judges 4–5). According to Zodhiates, *Deborah* means “bee,” perhaps emphasizing the [active and] organized life of that insect.¹²

Deborah is first called the feminine singular of ʾîshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAWH], which means *woman, wife*. It is the name that Adam gave to the woman.

Deborah is also called a prophetess. In fact, this is only the second time so far that we have seen this word in the Bible (the first time, it was applied to Miriam, Moses' sister). In fact, it might be instructive to examine each and every time that this word is found in Scripture.

The Doctrine of a Prophetess

1. The word used here is the feminine singular of n^{eb}bîyʾâh (נְבִיאָה) [pronounced n^{eb}-vee-AW], which is found very infrequently in the Old Testament, and it means *prophetess*; it is used of true and false prophets. Strong's #5031 BDB #612.
2. That Deborah was a legitimate prophetess is confirmed by Judges 4:6–7, 9, and 14.
3. We find this word used originally of Miriam in Ex. 15:20: *And Miriam, the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dancing.* This takes place during the singing of the song of Moses.
4. Deborah, of course, is called a prophetess in our passage, Judges 4:4. None of the other judges, save Samuel, the last judge, will be called a prophet, placing her in very distinguished company.
5. This word is not found again until 2Kings 22:14, which reads: *So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum, the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, the keeper of the wardrobe—now, she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter; and they spoke to her.* From the passage which follows, she appears to be a legitimate prophetess. This same verse is repeated in 2Chron. 24:22.

¹² *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 652.

6. In Isa. 8:33, we have a prophetess in a story which appears to be a vision rather than an actual event (it may be an actual event upon which some prophecy of Isaiah is advanced). **So I approached the prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. Then Jehovah said to me, "Name him Maher-shalal-has-baz"**
7. In what appears to be an open prayer, Nehemiah writes: **Remember, O my God, Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these works of theirs, and also Noadiah the prophetess and the rest of the prophets who were trying to frighten me** (Neh. 6:14). These three are actually false prophets, not sent by God, as Neh. 6:7–13 attests. Noadiah is not mentioned in that passage, but is guilty of being a false prophetess by association.
8. In conclusion, in all of the Old Testament, we really only have one prophetess of note, Deborah, who arose during a time of great degeneracy in Israel. She is a prophetess, a judge, and she will join Barak in battle as per his request. By contrasts, the word *prophet* occurs over 300 times in the Old Testament
9. The New Testament also is almost bereft of female prophets. We have a legitimate female prophetess mentioned in Luke 2:36: **And there was a prophetess, Ann, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with a husband seven years after her marriage.**
10. The only other prophetess mentioned in all of the New Testament is Jezebel, whom Jesus Christ detests, as she leads the people at Thyatira astray (Rev. 2:20–21). So the story in the New Testament is the same as the Old; half of the women who are prophets are not legitimate.
11. Let me add one additional comment from Moses. There were two men in the camp of Israel who were prophesying in God's name and were apparently legitimate. Joshua has his underpants in a bunch over this and came to Moses, saying, **"Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp...Moses, my lord, restrain them!" But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all Jehovah's people were prophets, that Jehovah would put His Spirit upon them!"** (Num. 11:27b, 28b–29)

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Then she's called *ʾishshāh* again, but this time as a feminine construct attached to her husband, Lappidoth, who is never mentioned again. There is this unbearable emphasis upon asceticism in the Catholic church where those who serve God preferably do so in celibacy. Paul suggested this, and rationalized his suggestion. He made it clear that this was not for everyone who served God. He also recommended that it is better to marry than to burn with sexual desire. Certainly, the Catholic church can point to Paul and to Paul's argument and say that it is better for a person to remain single and to serve God, as he is less likely to be derailed and he (or she) will have more time to devote to God's work. And all this is well and good—unless that person has an insatiable desire for the opposite sex, but is so confused by asceticism that he sublimates it or allows it to finally come out in ways which are embarrassing to the church. **It is better to marry than to burn with sexual desire** (I Cor. 7:9b; see also I Cor. 7:2). The idea that large chunks of the church which serves the community should be unmarried is ridiculous and is nowhere taught in God's Word.

Judges 4:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hîy' (אִי) [pronounced <i>hee</i>]	<i>she, it</i> ; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: <i>that, this</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
shâphaṭ (שָׁפַט) [pronounced <i>shaw-FAHT</i>]	<i>to judge, to condemn, to punish; to defend [especially the poor and oppressed], to defend [one's cause] and deliver him from his enemies; to rule, to govern</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #8199 BDB #1047

Judges 4:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿêth (תָּא) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Yisʿrâʿêl (לְיִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i>]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿêth (תָּו) [pronounced <i>gayth</i>]	<i>time, the right time, the proper time; opportunity</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6256 BDB #773
hîyʾ (הִיא) [pronounced <i>hee</i>]	<i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, personal pronoun; demonstrative pronoun; with the definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

Translation: ...was judging [or, governing] Israel at that time. You will notice that it seems as though we jump prematurely into Deborah and what she does, as we have gotten so used to thoughts being held together by *and*'s. An *and* is but a single line with a mark under it, not too unlike an underlined *i*. It is easy to see how that could be dropped out of the text. However, two early printed editions of the Massoretic text have an *and* prior to *she*. What Deborah is said to be doing is the Qal active participle of *shâphaṭ* (שָׁפַט) [pronounced *shaw-FAHT*], which means *to judge, to govern*. The point is that the very same word used of Othniel and Shamgar is also used of Deborah. Strong's #8199 BDB #1047. What we need to examine now is the **Doctrine of the Responsibilities and the Requirements of the Judges of Israel**.

Barnes suggests that all of the Judges had some sort of direct communication with God. I should qualify that. What we hear over and over again in books like Leviticus and Numbers is *and God said*. This is not what we hear in this book. The judges were certainly learned in Scripture and that, with the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, were able to render reasonable legal decisions, as well as lead Israel against the many oppressors of Israel. There is enough information in the canon of Scripture up until this time to understand that God has given Israel a particular plot of land and that He will fight on Israel's behalf. There is also enough information given in Scripture to indicate that Israel would find herself in this continual cycle of oppression and relief—that is, God has promised Israel either cursing or blessing, depending upon Israel's spiritual choices. We need to recognize those very choices stand before us. God gives us rich blessing and protection (much more than we realize) when our life lines up with His Word. When, as a saved believer, we turn away from Him and pursue something else—money, sex, approbation—this naturally puts us under discipline (just as touching a hot stove burns one's hand). It is simply the natural progression of things that a believer cannot get away from.¹³

¹³ Now don't get mixed up; God is not in the business of disciplining unbelievers. In some respects, the unbeliever can sin with impunity, with two restrictions: (1) the law of the land, and, (2) their behavior toward believers. An unbeliever cannot expect to persecute a believer and walk away unscathed. If you are the persecuted believer, just step aside and allow God room to work.

And she was dwelling under a palm of Deborah between the Ramah and Beth-el in a hill country of Ephraim; and so went up unto her sons of Israel for the judgment.

Judges
4:5

And she held court [lit., *was sitting*] under a palm of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el, in the hill country of Ephraim. So sons of Israel came to her for judgment.

Deborah lived beneath a palm between Ramah and Beth-el in the hill country of Ephraim; and sons of Israel came to her for resolution of disputes and matters of judgment.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And she was dwelling under a palm of Deborah between the Ramah and Beth-el in a hill country of Ephraim; and so went up unto her sons of Israel for the judgment.
Septuagint	And she sat under the palm-tree of Debbora between Rama and Baethel in mount Ephraim; and the children of Israel went up to her for judgement.
Significant differences:	None. The words which may appear to be different (<i>dwelling/sat</i>) are both legitimate translations of the Hebrew verb.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	She would sit under Deborah's Palm Tree between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, where Israelites would come and ask her to settle their legal cases.
<i>The Message</i>	She held court under Deborah's Palm between Ramah and Bethel in the hills of Ephraim. The People of Israel went to her in matters of justice.
NJB	She used to sit under Deborah's Palm between Ramah and Bethel in the highlands of Ephraim, and the Israelites would come to her for justice.
NLT	She would hold court under the Palm of Deborah, which stood between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came to her to settle their disputes.
REB	It was her custom to sit under the Palm Tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill-country of Ephraim, and Israelites seeking a judgement went up to her.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word</i> [™]	She used to sit under the Palm Tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. The people of Israel would come to her for legal decisions.
HCSB	It was her custom to sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her for judgment.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

LTHB	And she lived under the palm tree of Deborah, between Ramah and Bethel, in the hills of Ephraim. And the sons of Israel went up to her for judgment.
Young's Updated LT	And she is dwelling under the palm-tree of Deborah, between Ramah and Beth-El, in the hill-country of Ephraim, and the sons of Israel go up unto her for judgment.

What is the gist of this verse? .

Judges 4:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hîy' (הִיא) [pronounced hee]	<i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
yâshab (יָשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH ^{AV}]	<i>inhabiting, staying, remaining, dwelling, sitting</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced TAH-khahth]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of</i>	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
tâmâr (תָּמָר) [pronounced taw-MAWR]	<i>palm-tree, date-palm, Phoenix dactylifera; palms, palm trees</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8558 BDB #1071
D ^o bôwrâh (דְּבוֹרָה) [pronounced d ^{eb} -vôh-RAW],	<i>bee; transliterated Deborah</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1683 BDB #184
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced bane]	<i>in the midst of, between, among; when found twice, it means between</i>	preposition	Strong's #996 BDB #107
Râmâh (רָמָה) [pronounced raw-MAW]	<i>height, high place; transliterated Ramah</i>	feminine noun used primarily as a proper noun; with the directional hê	Strong's #7414 (equivalent to Strong's #7413) BDB #928
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced bane]	<i>in the midst of, between, among; when found twice, it means between</i>	preposition	Strong's #996 BDB #107
Bêyth-`êl (בֵּית־אֵל) [pronounced bayth-AYHL]	<i>house of God; transliterated Bethel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1008 BDB #110
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
har (הַר) [pronounced har]	<i>hill; mountain, mount; hill-country</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #2042 (and #2022) BDB #249

Judges 4:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿEph ^h rayim (אֶפְרַיִם) [pronounced ef-RAH-yim]	<i>to bear fruit, to be fruitful;</i> transliterated <i>Ephraim</i>	masculine proper noun; pausal form	Strong's #669 BDB #68

Translation: *And she held court* [lit., *was sitting*] *under a palm of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el, in the hill country of Ephraim,...* The first verb is the Qal active participle of *yâsha^{bv}* (יָשַׁב) [pronounced *yaw-SHAH^{BV}*] and it means *to remain, sit, dwell*. Strong's #3427 BDB #442. Deborah is located immediately due south of where Jabin and Sisera oppressed Israel. She herself appears unaffected by this oppression. What is interesting is the phrasing that she lived or dwelt beneath a palm (actually, *under a palm of Deborah*). We find similar phrasing in I Sam. 14:2a: *And Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree which is in Migron;* and I Sam. 22:6b: *Now Saul was sitting in Gibeah, under the tamarisk tree.* It reminds me of some very pleasant times that I spent at my first college outside the library, hanging with friends under the liquidambar tree.

This verse deals with Deborah's customary action as a judge. We have the conjunction *bayin* (בֵּין) [pronounced *bah-YIN*] or *bêyn* (בֵּין) [pronounced *bane*]. When found twice, as here, the preposition corresponds most closely with our word *between*. Strong's #996 BDB #107. Now, although she set up shop in Ephraim, this does not mean only Ephraimites came to her. A judge apparently served a fairly wide area.

Now, like everyone else, the first time I read this, I looked at the cities as if they weren't even there. Benjamin is directly south of Ephraim. At the most northern border of Benjamin, between Benjamin and Ephraim, is the city of Beth-el. Ramah also properly belongs to Benjamin (Joshua 18:25, 28). This would place Deborah on the border between Ephraim and Benjamin, judging in an area belonging to Ephraim.¹⁴ This does not appear to be a city; it appears as though she was most comfortable sitting under a palm in the hill country of Ephraim.

Judges 4:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so,</i> <i>that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿâlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced ġaw-LAWH]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to come up,</i> <i>to rise, to climb</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced e/]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to;</i> <i>against; concerning, regarding;</i> <i>besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
bânîym (בְּנֵיִם) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i>]	<i>sons, descendants; sometimes</i> <i>rendered men</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Yis ^h râ ^h ʿel (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-</i> <i>ALE</i>]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

¹⁴ Obviously, the territory of Benjamin is not convex, otherwise, a point between two points in Benjamin could not lie in Ephraim.

Judges 4:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ^e)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix`	No Strong's # BDB #510
mîsh ^e pâṭ (שׁוֹפֵט) [pronounced <i>mish^e-PAWT</i>]	<i>judgement, justice, a verdict rendered by a judge, a judicial decision, a judicial sentence, a verdict, a judgement of the court</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4941 BDB #1048

Gesenius organizes the meanings as follows:

(1) *a judgement*; including:

(a) *the act of judging*; (b) *the place of judgment*; (c) *a forensic cause, the setting forth of a cause, to appeal a judgment*; (d) *the sentence of a judge*; (e) *the fault or crime one is judged for*;

(2) *a right, that which is just, lawful according to law*; which set of meanings would include:

(a) *a law, a statute; a body of laws*; (b) *that which is lawfully due a person, a privilege, a legal privilege, the right of redemption, the right of primogeniture*; (c) *a manner, a custom*; (d) *a fashion, a kind, a plan*.

We could possibly add the meanings for the plural: *laws, responsibilities, privileges*. From the standpoint of the one under judgment, *mîshepâṭ* could mean *appeal*.

Translation: ...and sons of Israel came to her for judgment. Now here is a place where we need to separate responsibility from general practice. A judge had civil authority and people brought to the judges matters of dispute as well as possibly criminal cases. Their involvement with the military appears to be more of an outgrowth of their authority as judges, as opposed to an assigned function of judging. Deborah will only participate in the military campaign of Barak as a favor to him (vv. 8–9) and not because this was a part of her job description.

And so she sent and so she summoned Barak ben Abinoam from Kedesh-Naphtali and so she said unto him, “Has not Y^ehowah, God of Israel, ‘Go and you will draw out in Mount of Tabor and you will take with you ten thousand men from sons of Naphtali and from sons of Zebulun.

Judges
4:6

She summoned Barak, son of Abinoam from Kedesh-Naphtali, and said to him, “Has not Y^ehowah, God of Israel, commanded you, ‘Go and proceed to Mount Tabor and you will take with you 10,000 men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun.

And then she sent for and summoned Barak, the sons of Abinoam, from Kedesh-Naphtali. When he arrived, she said to him, “Didn’t Jehovah, the God of Israel, order you, ‘Go to Mount Tabor and gather 10,000 men from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, and take them with you.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so she sent and so she summoned Barak ben Abinoam from Kedesh-Naphtali and so she said unto him, “Has not Y^ehowah, God of Israel, ‘Go and you will draw out in Mount of Tabor and you will take with you ten thousand men from sons of Naphtali and from sons of Zebulun.

Septuagint

And Debbora sent and called Barac the son of Abineem out of Cades Nephthali, and she said to him, “Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded you? And you will

depart to mount Tabor, and you will take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Nephthali and of the sons of Zabulon.

Significant differences: The Greek begins with *Deborah's* name; the Hebrew (and the Latin and the Syriac) simply use the feminine singular of the verb *to send*. *Commanded* in the Greek has a 3rd person masculine singular suffix, as does the Syriac and the Latin, apparently (or, so their English translations). Finally, the verb *to go* in the Hebrew is in the imperative; however, in the Greek, it is a future middle indicative, which could be understood as an imperative, but, strictly speaking, it is not. The Latin and Syriac both use the imperative here.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV One day, Barak the son of Abinoam was in Kedesh in Naphtali, and Deborah sent word for him to come and talk with her. When he arrived, she said: I have a message for you from the LORD God of Israel! You are to get together an army of ten thousand men from the Naphtali and Zebulun tribes and lead them to Mount Tabor.

The Message She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "It has become clear that GOD, the God of Israel, commands you: Go to Mount Tabor and prepare for battle. Take ten companies of soldiers from Naphtali and Zebulun.

NLT One day, she sent for Barak son of Abinoam, who lived in Kedesh in the land of Naphtali. She said to him, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: Assemble ten thousand warriors from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun at Mount Tabor.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ Deborah summoned Barak, son of Abinoam, from Kedesh in Naphtali. She told him, "The LORD God of Israel has given you this order: 'Gather troops on Mount Tabor. Take 10,000 men from Naphtali and Zebulun with you.

HCSB She summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "Hasn't the LORD, the God of Israel, commanded you: 'Go, deploy the troops on Mount Tabor, and take with you 10,000 men from the Naphtalites and Zebulunites?.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV 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.

NRSV She sent and summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you, 'Go, take position at Mount Tabor, bringing ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun.

Young's Updated LT And she sends and calles for Barak son of Abinoam, out of Kedesh-Naphtali, and says unto him, "Has not Jehovah, God of Israel, commanded? Go, and you have drawn towards mount Tabor, and have taken with you ten thousand men, out of the sons of Naphtali, and out of the sons of Zebulun.

What is the gist of this verse? .

Judges 4:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
It is typical in the Hebrew for each sentence—in fact, each thought—to begin with a wâw consecutive in the Hebrew. However, it is not necessary in an English translation to include a connective at every such juncture, as our language does not necessarily require that for successive thoughts or actions.			
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ʾ) [pronounced ʾ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Bârâq (בָּרָק) [pronounced baw-RAWK]	<i>lightening, lightening flash; transliterated Barak</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #1301 BDB #140
There is no difference between this proper noun and the masculine singular noun, bârâq, which means <i>lightening</i> . Strong's #1300 BDB #140.			
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
ʾĀbîynôʿam (אָבִינֹעַם) [pronounced u ^b -vee-noh-ĠAHM]	<i>my father is a delight; father of pleasantness; transliterated Abinoam</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #42 BDB #4
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
Qedesh (קֹדֶשׁ) [pronounced KEH-desh]	<i>sanctuary; set apart; transliterated Kedesh</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #6943 BDB #873
Naph ^{et} tâlîy (נַפְתָּלִי) [pronounced nahf ^{et} -taw-EE]	<i>wrestling; possibly cord, thread; twisted; transliterated Naphtali</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #5321 BDB #836

Translation: She summoned Barak, son of Abinoam from Kedesh-Naphtali,... Barak is properly bârâq (בָּרָק) [pronounced baw-RAWK], which is a proper name not related to *blessing* (bêrâkâh—Strong's #1293 BDB #139), but to *lightning* or *lightning flash* (bârâq—Strong's #1300 BDB #140). Strong's #1301 BDB #140. Barak lived north, northeast of Deborah, near the Sea of Galilee (it was not called that then, although the district was¹⁵), in the territory of Naphtali.

¹⁵ See Joshua 21:32.

Judges 4:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾāmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced e/]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
hă (הֲ) [pronounced heh]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied.		Strong's #none BDB #209
lôʾ (לוֹ' א' or לא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
Hă lôʾ together expect an affirmative answer. In fact, these two words together present a question with an obvious, self-evident answer.			
tsâvâh (צָוָה) [pronounced tsaw-VAW]	<i>to commission, to mandate, to lay charge upon, to give charge to, charge, command, order</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #6680 BDB #845
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ʾēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods, foreign gods, god; God; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
Yisʿrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

Translation: „,and said to him, “Has not Y^ehowah, God of Israel, commanded you,...

Barnes: Deborah refers to Jehovah as God of Israel to remind the Israelites, in the day of their distress, that He was ready to perform the mercy promised to their fathers, and to remember His holy Covenant. This title, too, would recall to their memories in an instant all His past acts in Egypt, at the Red Sea, in the wilderness, and in the conquest of Canaan.¹⁶

¹⁶ Barnes' Notes, Volume 2, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 424.

Judges 4:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>go, come, depart, walk; advance</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mâshak ^e (מָשַׁךְ) [pronounced <i>maw-SHAHK^e</i>]	<i>to draw out, to lure, to drag, to continue with something, to proceed to, to march to</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4900 BDB #604
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
har (הַר) [pronounced <i>har</i>]	<i>hill; mountain, mount; hill-country</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #2042 (and #2022) BDB #249
Tâbôwr (תְּבוֹר) [pronounced <i>taw-BOHR</i>]	<i>mound; and is transliterated Tabor</i>	Proper noun/location	Strong's #8396 BDB #1061

Translation:...[Go and proceed to Mount Tabor...](#) What God has apparently ordered him to do is first the Qal imperative of hâlak^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *haw-LAHK^e*], which means *go, come, depart, walk*. Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229. The second thing he was suppose to do was the Qal perfect of mâshak^e (מָשַׁךְ) [pronounced *maw-SHAHK^e*], which means, in general, *to draw out, to drag, to continue with something, to proceed to, to march to*. This is a difficult verb and is translated variously *gather* (Owen); *thou hast drawn towards* (Young); *draw towards* (Rotherham); *march to* (NASB); *lead the way to* (NIV). Strong's #4900 BDB #604.

What he was drawing toward himself in Mount Tabor was these 10,000 men. Mount Tabor is roughly 1300 feet high, just northeast of the battle site.¹⁷

Barnes: The purpose of this was to effect a junction of the northern tribes with the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin, who were separated from them by the plain of Esdraelon, where Sisera's chariots would naturally congregate and be more effective. Mount Tabor rises from the plain of Esdraelon, about 1,865 ft. above the sea, and its broad top of nearly a mile in circumference afforded a strong position, out of reach of Sisera's chariots.¹⁸

We have gone into much greater detail concerning Mount Tabor back in Joshua 19:22, where ZPEB also agrees with the higher figure, making me think that 1300 ft. found in the NIV Study Bible was a typo and should have been 1800 ft. This could also have referred to the actual height of the mountain with respect to the surrounding area, as opposed to its height above sea level.

Edersheim seems to agree with the latter understanding. *About six or eight miles east of Nazareth rises abruptly a beautifully-shaped conical mountain, about 1000 feet high. This is Mount Table ("the*

¹⁷ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 332.

¹⁸ *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 424. I realize that we have some serious difference of opinion as to the high of Mount Tabor, so I figured that I should include both figures.

height"), its sloping sides covered with trees, and affording from its summit one of the most extensive and beautiful prospects in Palestine.¹⁹

In either case, we are not talking some great mountain, as this is roughly a third of a mile high (for comparison, keep in mind that Denver is the *mile-high* city. Now, the reason for Israel meeting here was simple; the chariots of Sisera would be useless against an army fighting on a wooded mountain. Their advantage would be found only in an open plain area. This would allow for the gathering of such a large group of people in opposition to Sisera.

Edersheim continues: *Tidings soon reached the head-quarters of Sisera. His chariot could only of course fight to advantage in the valleys, and he naturally marched north-west to the plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon. This has ever been, and will prove in the final contest (Rev. 16:16), the great battle-field of Israel. It was now the first of many times that its fertile soil was to be watered with the blood of men.*²⁰

Judges 4:6d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
ʿasârâh (עֶשְׂרֵה) [pronounced <i>gah-saw-RAW</i>]	<i>ten</i>	feminine numeral	Strong's #6235 BDB #796
ʿălâphîym (אַלְפֵיַיִם) pronounced <i>uh-law-FEEM</i>	<i>thousands, families, [military] units</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #505 (and #504) BDB #48
ʿîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
bânîym (בְּנֵיַיִם) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i>]	<i>sons, descendants; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Naph ^{et} âlîy (נַפְתָּלִי) [pronounced <i>nahf^t-taw-EE</i>]	<i>wrestling; possibly cord, thread; twisted; transliterated Naphtali</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #5321 BDB #836

¹⁹ Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 352.

²⁰ Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 352.

Judges 4:6d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bânîym (בָּנִים) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i>]	<i>sons, descendants; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Z ^e bûw ^l ûn (זְבוּלוֹן) [pronounced <i>z^eb-oo-LOON</i>]	<i>exalted, honored; transliterated Zebulun</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #2074 BDB #259

Translation: ...and you will take with you 10,000 men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun. The next verb is the Qal perfect of lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced *law-KAHKH*] which means *to take, to take from, to take in marriage, to seize*. Strong's #3947 BDB #542. This is followed by the preposition *with*. So, what God commanded him to do was to, “Go and you will draw out in Mount of Tabor and you will take with you...” Apparently God had made a demand of Barak—a fairly simple and clear one that even Deborah was aware of—and that Barak had not fulfilled this command. At least, this is how this appeared to me the first few times that I read it. The original Qal imperative carries with it the same force of the other verbs; and the other verbs in the Qal perfect means that this should have been completed action by now.

Zodhiates presents a somewhat different picture here. He presents Barak as waiting for guidance from Deborah, which would be the prudent thing to do. He bases part of the upon the fact that Barak is mentioned in the mini-hall of faith in Heb. 11:32.²¹ Originally, I didn't see it that way myself. In v. 6, it appears as though both Deborah and Barak already knew what God's will was for Barak and that Barak was stalling. His request that Deborah accompany him (v. 8) could be interpreted as one who wanted to keep God's will and guidance close by, but I think this was done more out of fear. Lightning won't strike him while he is standing next to Deborah. Deborah's prophecy in v. 9 will sound as though Barak will be robbed of some of the honor and glory of capturing and killing Sisera.

And I will draw out to you unto a river Kishon Sisera, a general of an army of Jabin and his chariots and his troops and I will give him into your hand.²² ”
Judges 4:7

And I will lure [lit., draw out] Sisera, the general of the army of Jabin, to you, to the Kishon River. Furthermore, I will give his chariots and his troops into your hand.’ ”

And I will lure Sisera, the general of the army of Jabin, along with his chariots and his troops, to the Kishon River to you, and I will give him into your hand.’ ”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And I will draw out to you unto a river Kishon Sisera, a general of an army of Jabin and his chariots and his troops and I will give him into your hand.’ ”

²¹ The writer of Hebrews names several heroes of faith and provides some detail as to why they are recognized as great. At the end of this, he adds: *And what more will I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who, by faith, conquered kingdoms, performed righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight* (Heb. 11:32–33).

²² In two early printed editions and in the Septuagint and the Syriac codices, we have the plural *hands*.

eptuagint And I will bring to you, to the torrent of Kison, Sisera the captain of the host of Jabin, and his chariots, and his multitude, and I will deliver them into yours hands.

Significant differences: In the Latin and Hebrew, this verse ends with the word *hand*; it is *hands* in the Septuagint, Peshitta and in two early printed editions.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV The LORD will trick Sisera into coming out to fight you at the Kishon River. Sisera will be leading King Jabin's army as usual, and they will have their chariots, but the LORD has promised to help you defeat them.

The Message I'll take care of getting Sisera, the leader of Jabin's army, to the Kishon River with all his chariots and troops. And I'll make sure you win the battle."

NJB I shall entice Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, to encounter you at the Torrent of Kishon with his chariots and troops; and I shall but him into your power"?'

NLT I will lure Sisera, commander of Jabin's army, along with his chariots and warriors, to the Kishon River. There I will give you victory over him."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word[™] I will lead Sisera (the commander of Jabin's army), his chariots, and troops to you at the Kishon River. I will hand him over to you."

HCSB Then I will lure Sisera commander of Jabin's forces, his chariots, and his army at the Wadi Kishon to fight against you, and I will hand him over to you."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Emphasized Bible And she sent and called for Barak son of Abinoam, out of Kadesh-naphtali,—and said to him—Hath not Yahweh God of Israel commanded,—Come and draw towards Mount Tabor, and bring with thee—ten thousand men, of the sons of Naphtali, and of the sons of Zebulun; and I will draw unto thee unto the torrent of Kishon, Sisera, prince of the host of Jabin, with his chariots, and with his multitude—and will deliver him unto thy hand?

ESV 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'?"

NASB Now she sent and summoned Barak the sons 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. And 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.' "

WEB I will draw to you, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into your hand.

Young's Updated LT And I have drawn unto you, unto the brook Kishon, Sisera, head of the host of Jabin, and his chariot, and his multitude, and have given him into your hand."

What is the gist of this verse? .

Judges 4:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mâshak ^e (משך) [pronounced <i>maw-SHAHK^e</i>]	<i>to draw out, to lure; to drag, to continue with something, to proceed to, to march to</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4900 BDB #604
ʿel (לְ) [pronounced <i>e/</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʿel (לְ) [pronounced <i>e/</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
nachal (נַחַל) [pronounced <i>NAHKH-al</i>]	<i>brook, torrent</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5158 BDB #636
qîyshôwn (קִישׁוֹן) [pronounced <i>kee-SHOWN</i>]	<i>winding, curving, twisted; torturous transliterated Kishon</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #7028 BDB #885
ʿêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Çîyç ^e râ ^ʿ (צִיְצֵרָא) [pronounced <i>sees^e-RAW</i>]	<i>battle array</i> [according to BDB]; and is transliterated <i>Sisera</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #5516 BDB #696
sar (שַׂר) [pronounced <i>sar</i>]	<i>chieftain, chief, ruler, official, captain, prince, leader, commander</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8269 BDB #978
tsâbâ ^ʿ (צָבָא) [pronounced <i>tsaw^b-VAW</i>]	<i>army, war, or warfare</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6635 DB #838
Yâbîyn (יַבִּין) [pronounced <i>yaw-BEEN</i>]	<i>intelligent; God [is] intelligent; whom God observes; transliterated Jabin</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #2985 BDB #108

Translation: “ ‘And I will lure [lit., draw out] Sisera, the general of the army of Jabin, to you, to the Kishon River.

Judges 4:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿêth (תּ א) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
It is possible what is meant here is...			
ʿêth (תּ א) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object)	Strong's #854 BDB #85
recheb (רֶכֶב) [pronounced <i>REH-khe^bv</i>]	<i>chariot, mill-stone, rider</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7393 BDB #939

Translation: ...his chariots...

Judges 4:7c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿêth (תּ א) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
It is possible what is meant here is...			
ʿêth (תּ א) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object)	Strong's #854 BDB #85
hâmôwn (וְיָמֹוֹן) [pronounced <i>haw-MOHN</i>]	<i>multitude, crowd, throng</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1995 BDB #242

Translation: ...and his troops into...

Judges 4:7d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Judges 4:7d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

This combination of the bêyth preposition and *hand* means *with you; through you, by you, by means of you; at your hand* [i.e., *before your, in your sight*].

Translation: [Furthermore, I will give...your hand.'](#) "

This verse continues the quotation of Jehovah which Deborah is stating. Then she uses the verb *mâshak^e* again and in the Qal perfect. In most translations, you would have no clue that God has used the same verse twice. Note the chart below:

Translation	Judges 4:6	Judges 4:7	Translation	Judges 4:6	Judges 4:7
Amplified Bible	gather	I will draw out	NIV	lead the way to	I will lure
NASB	march to	I will draw out	NRSV	take position [at]	I will draw out
Rotherham	draw towards	draw [unto thee]	Young	thou hast drawn towards	I have drawn [unto thee]

I think that we can safely say that *to draw out [or towards]* would be the safest translation. In the first case, Barak is supposed to draw to himself in Mount Tabor the 10,000 men (or, he is support to draw *toward* Mount Tabor). What God will do is to see to it that Sisera is drawn towards Barak. Strong's #4900 BDB #604. The key is the prepositional phrase which follows *mâshak^e*, which is *unto you*. This also justifies the variety of translations given by the same translator. At this juncture, most Bibles refer back to the Sea of Reeds when God hardened Pharaoh's heart, drawing him and his troops after Moses, and to their final destruction in the Sea of Reeds (Ex. 14).

God has already give Barak the order to move toward Mount Tabor and to take with him 10,000 men; then God promises that He will draw Sisera toward Barak and his troops. God apparently gave these orders some time ago and Barak has not gotten around to following them. In fact, Deborah has to call him to her to set him straight. You might ask, *how the hell did she know this? Furthermore, what business is it of hers?* Good questions. I doubt that God came and spoke to Barak. Although we don't get to know much about him other than through innuendo, my thinking is that his bravery is not going to go down in history side-by-side that of Moses, Joshua, or David. The most reasonable explanation here is that she personally prophesied his victory over Sisera and Jabin already and she called his butt in because he had not yet moved out.

The alternate theory is that she is calling Barak for the first time and he is hearing this for the first time. There is some merit in this theory, as one would think if she had called him before (or, if anyone else had spoken to Barak, including God directly), that this would have been recorded in God's Word. What might help is if you read through

some of the more accurate translations. What I should point out is there is no past, present and future tense in the Hebrew as we have in the English. The tenses which we do have are perfect (completed action) and the imperfect (incomplete action). Unfortunately, that is an over-simplification.

The traditional view of the imperfect tense is that it is a reference to an incomplete or to a future action. This is true, to some extent. Sometimes the imperfect tense views just a portion of an event—i.e., it focuses in on a specific portion of an event and it does not concern itself with the event having already occurred or not. This is often used for on-going action, contingent action, and it can be used to convey capability, possibility and obligation, making it similar to the *subjunctive and optative moods in the Greek*.²³ The imperfect is a tense of continuous action or uncompleted action, but there is no reference to time. It is referred to by some lexicons as the future tense, although that is an improper designation. This is because the imperfect tense can refer to continuous action in past time, present time or in future time.

The traditional view of the perfect tense is that it is a completed action. However, the perfect looks at the action of the verb as a whole, without an thought to the duration of the events or to their completeness. Zodhiates says that the perfect tense can stand for some action which has begun in the past (or the present) and continues into the present (or the future). It is a tense which examines the action of the verb as a whole, whether the action is still ongoing or not. Context tells us whether we are viewing the action of the verb from its inception, progression or completion. I mention this because *God commanding [Barak]* is a verb which is in the perfect tense. In most English versions, it sounds as though God had commanded Barak some time ago and that he had just not gotten around to doing anything about it.

I must admit that when I first read this, it struck me as though Deborah (or someone else) had already prophesied to Barak concerning his victory of Sisera and that he had not gone through with what God had for him to do. However, in the light of the text and a better understanding of the perfect and imperfect tenses, I can see that this very well could be the first time that Barak has heard of this.

One of the next things that we should examine is the Kishon River and the general geography involved. As you can see on the map, Mount Tabor is between the Sea of Chinnereth (what we know as the Sea of Galilee) and the Kishon River. The Kishon is actually a rather short river, 25 miles in length. The Hebrew word is qîyshôwn (קישון) [pronounced kee-SHOWN], which has been transliterated Kishon. ZPEB says it means *curving*, but I could not confirm that in my Hebrew



Taken from <http://www.anova.org/sev/atlas/htm/044.htm>. The Kishon River is in the Jezreel Valley.

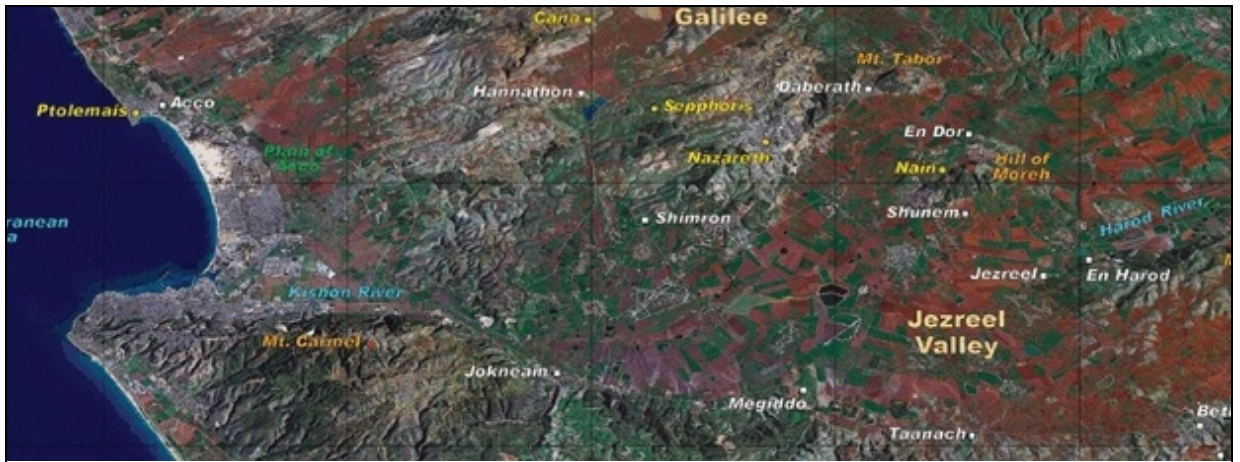
Lexicon. This river is mentioned surprisingly few times in Scripture: it is mentioned with regards to this battle (Judges 4:7, 13 5:21 Psalm 83:9) and then once again during the time of Elijah (I Kings 18:40). During the spring and the spring rains, this is apparently a difficult barrier for military operations, although when there has been little rain, this torrent settles down into a stream and is often even dry.

Barnes gives us a marvelous description: *The brook of stream Kishon...so called from its winding course, caused by the dead level of the plain of Esdraelon through which it flows, rises, in respect to one of its sources or feeders, in Mount Tabor, and flows nearly due west through the plain, under Mount Carmel, and into the Bay of Acre. In the early or eastern part of its course, before it is recruited by the springs on Carmel, it is nothing but a torrent, often dry, but liable to swell very suddenly and dangerously, and to overflow its banks in early spring, after rain or the melting of snow. The ground*

²³ This was taken primarily from *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; p 2277.

on the banks of the Kishon near Megiddo...becomes an impassable morass under the same circumstances, and would be particularly dangerous to a large number of chariots.²⁴

For this battle, the Israelites had gathered at Mount Tabor and Sisera and his army were somewhere along the Kishon. To put his in perspective, Deborah would be found about



This is a modern areal view of the same area. Taken from <http://www.bible.org/assets/netbible/map1.jpg>

80 miles south of Mount Tabor—she would actually be off of our map. Barak was actually located about 25 miles north-northeast of Mount Tabor in Kedesh, Naphtali. In order to get to Deborah, he would have had to have traveled quite a distance to begin with—in fact, he would have to travel through Hazor (or around Hazor), where Jabin ruled from (which was midway between Kedesh and the Lake Chinnereth. Then Barak would have to travel most of the distance back. How they knew of one another (if they did) is not known and why God chose Barak is also unknown. Obviously, he had some leadership capabilities, which accounts for him being able to muster Israelites resistance troops in such short order.

The NIV Study Bible offers the reasoning behind choosing this area: *With the Israelites encamped on the slopes of Mount Tabor, safe from chariot attack, the Lord’s strategy was to draw Sisera into a trap. For the battle site, Sisera cleverly chose the Valley of Jezreel²⁵ along the Kishon River, where his chariot forces would have ample maneuvering space to range the battlefield and attack in numbers from any quarter. But that was his undoing, for he did not know the power of the Lord, who would fight from heaven for Israel with storm and flood (see Judges 5:20–21), as he had done in the days of Joshua (Judges 10:11–14). Even in modern times storms have rendered the plain along the Kishon virtually impassable. In April of 1799 the flooded Kishon River aided Napoleon’s victory over a Turkish army.²⁶*

And so said unto her Barak, “If you will go with me and I will go and if you will not go with me, I will not go.”

Judges
4:8

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

Then Barak said to her, “If you go with me, then I’ll go; but if you won’t go with me, then I won’t go.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

²⁴ Barnes’ Notes, Volume 2, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 424.

²⁵ I am obliged to point out that there is not 100% agreement among theologians as to the battle site. However, the reasoning of the NIV seems quite sound and it is completely in line with Judges 5:19–21.

²⁶ The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 332.

Masoretic Text	And so said unto her Barak, "If you will go with me and I will go and if you will not go with me, I will not go."
Septuagint	And Barac said to her, If you go with me, I will go; and if you wilt not go with me, I will not go; for I know not the day on which the Lord prospers his messenger with me.

Significant differences: The LXX adds the fairly long phrase: *...for I know not the day on which the Lord prospers his messenger with me.* This sentence is not found in the Latin, Hebrew or Syriac. Logically, the Greek translators found this in their Hebrew manuscripts, but we do not find it in ours. It is not unheard of for a sentence to get dropped out of the Hebrew text due to a poor manuscript or a copyist's error.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	"I'm not going unless you go!" Barak told her.
NJB	Barak replied, 'If you come with me, I shall go; if you will not come, I shall not go, for I do not know how to choose the day when the angel of Yahweh will grant me success.' This final phrase is taken from the LXX, and it gives the sense that, Barak did not need Deborah to fight at his side, but to guide his actions, inasmuch as he would be even uncertain as to what day he should attack.
NLT	Barak told her, "I will go, but only if you go with me!"

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	Barak said to her, "If you go with me, I'll go. But if you don't go with me, I won't go."
HCSB	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."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV	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."
Young's Updated LT	And Barak says unto her, "If you go with me, then I have gone; and if you do not go with me, I will not go."

What is the gist of this verse? Barak tells Deborah that he is only going up against the Canaanites if she goes with him.

Judges 4:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced el]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Judges 4:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Bârâq (בָּרָק) [pronounced <i>baw-RAWK</i>]	<i>lightening, lightening flash;</i> transliterated <i>Barak</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #1301 BDB #140
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i>]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

Translation: Then Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, then I will go;... Barak does not completely trust the Word of God, and asks for Deborah to put her money where her mouth is. The idea is, if she will accompany him, risk her life, and guide him in any way possible, that he will feel comfortable enough to follow God’s directives.

Judges 4:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i>]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
lô ^ʾ (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
Together, ʾîm lô ^ʾ (אִם לֹא) [pronounced <i>eem low</i>] act as an emphatic affirmative and they mean <i>if not, surely, unless</i> . However, here, the negative is properly applied to the verb.			
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

Judges 4:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
lô' (לֹא or לֹאֵל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

Translation: ...and if you will not go with me, [then] I will not go.” Barak uses the same verb four times. He is obviously afraid and has little or no faith in God’s deliverance. Now, Barak’s almost stuttered response to her also indicates that he could be hearing this for the very first time. Now, we have spoken about women prophets and how rare they were. Here is one telling Barak that God has spoken and this is what he has to do. His response to her, in essence, is, *put your money where your mouth is*. At first I thought that Barak was simply afraid to step up to the plate (which is certainly a likely partial truth). However, he must also have his suspicions about this lady prophet. Therefore, what he wants is he wants Deborah to go along. If she is messtup and not giving him God’s Word, then she will die too.

McGee writes: *If there ever was a general who was a sissy, it was Barak. He should have been out in the thick of the battle, but here he is hiding behind a woman’s skirt. Barak will not go into battle unless Deborah goes along. If this prophetess went with him, he felt he would be successful in battle. No wonder God had to use a woman in that day!*²⁷

Barnes is quite a bit more charitable here, pointing out that several great saints showed initial reluctance, e.g., Abraham (Gen. 15:2–3 17:18), Moses (Ex. 4:10, 13), Peter (Matt. 14:30–31). Given the fact that God never had direct contact with Barak (which is not the case of the three saints mentioned), we can’t be too hard on him for this. The fact that he suffered a few missteps should give us encouragement in our own spiritual lives. On the other hand, Barak did have direct contact with Deborah, and she was a well-known prophetess; so, even though he did not have direct contact with God, he had direct contact with a woman of God.

It is possible that Barak’s reasoning is, Deborah’s present might lend credence to his leadership before his soldiers; and that she would be there to guide him through any uncertainty or questions. However, on the negative side; she is a prophetess of God, and, if her presence were necessary, then she would have already offered to accompany him.

You must be careful about your application here. Of course, you should believe God; of course, you should exhibit stronger faith in God than you do—that should be clear and obvious. However, be careful in this regard. If you have some mystical experience, e.g., speaking in tongues, hearing voices, hearing God speak to you, seeing Jesus; **do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits** (1John 4:1). They must be in accordance with Bible doctrine (John then gives the example that, they must line up with the doctrine that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh²⁸). Do not put your faith in supernatural phenomenon, put your faith in the Word of God. Do not attempt to strengthen your faith with regards to extra-Biblical phenomenon; strengthen your faith based in the Word of God.

²⁷ J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 134.

²⁸ Whereas, believers in the 20th century have difficulty believing that Jesus Christ is God; people in the 1st century had difficulty believing that Jesus is truly a man.

There have been many believers who struggled with faith in God’s Word: Gideon (Judges 6:15, 36, 40), Abraham (Gen. 15:2–3 17:18), Moses (Ex. 4:10, 13), and Peter (Matt. 14:30–31). So, when you are weak in faith, you will be in good company. However, God will offer you tests and trials in order to strengthen your faith. When you do not trust God in this or that thing, God will either provide you more Scriptural clarification or He will provide you a test in that regard. Often, it is a matter of, do you want to learn the hard way or the easy way?

The following ending to v. 8 is found in the Septuagint only:

[...I will not go]; for I have not seen the day in this grants a Lord the angel with me.” Judges 4:8c **[...then I will not go]; for I do not know the day in which the Lord will lead [me] by the Angel.”**

[...then I won’t go]; because I do not know on which day the Angel of the Lord will lead me [into battle].”

Very few translated this portion of this verse:

- Brenton ...for I know not the day on which the Lord prospers his messenger with me.
- Clarke ...because I know not the day in which the Lord will send his angel to give me success.”
- Clarke (paraphrased) “I do not know,” says he, “The Day in which God will send his angel to give me prosperity: come with we that you may direct me in this respect.”
- NJB ...for I do not know how to choose the day when the angel of Yahweh will grant me success.’
- Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge “Because I know not the day in which God will send his angel to give me prosperity.”

What is the gist of this verse? Barak explains to Deborah that he does not even know in which day he should be led by God to attack.

The Septuagint adds an explanatory phrase at the end of this verse. This does not mean that a translator working on the Septuagint suddenly decided, “Let me see if I can better explain this.” This means, the manuscript that the translator worked with had this phrase in it, which he translated into the Greek. Now, in my opinion, this little phrase pulls this chapter together, and gives greater sense to vv. 14 and 23.

Judges 4:8c Text from the Greek Septuagint (not found in MT)			
Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong’s Number
hóti (ὅτι) [pronounced HOH-tee]	that, because, since; as concerning that; as though	demonstrative or causal conjunction	Strong’s #3754
ouk (οὐκ) [pronounced ook]	no, not, nothing, none, no one	negation; this form is used before a vowel	Strong’s #3756
eidô (εἶδω) [pronounced Ī-doh]	to see, to perceive, to discern, to know	1 st person singular, perfect active indicative	Strong’s #1492
tên (τὴν) [pronounced tayn]	the	feminine singular definite article; accusative case	Strong’s #3588
hêmera (ἡμέρα) [pronounced hay-MEH-raw]	day, daytime; 24-hour day; period of time	feminine singular noun	Strong’s #2250

Judges 4:8c Text from the Greek Septuagint (not found in MT)

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
en (ἐν) [pronounced <i>en</i>]	<i>in, by means of, with; among</i>	preposition with the locative, dative and instrumental cases	Strong's #1722
hê (ἡ) [pronounced <i>hey</i>]	<i>the; this, that; these</i>	feminine singular definite article; nominative and vocative cases	Strong's #3588
The online Bible lists this as a feminine singular dative.			
euodoô (εὐοδῶ) [pronounced <i>you-oh-DOH-oh</i>]	Thayer: <i>to grant a prosperous and expeditious journey, to lead by a direct and easy way; to grant a successful issue, to cause to prosper; to prosper, be successful</i>	3 rd person singular, present active indicative	Strong's #2137
kurios (κύριος) [pronounced <i>KOO-ree-oss</i>]	<i>lord, master; Lord; he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding; the possessor and disposer of a thing; the owner; one who has control of the person; prince, chief, sovereign</i>	masculine singular noun; nominative case	Strong's #2962
ton (τόν) [pronounced <i>tahn</i>]	<i>the</i>	masculine singular definite article in the accusative case	Strong's #3588
aggelos (ἄγγελος) [pronounced <i>AHN-geh-loss</i>]	Thayer: <i>a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, an angel, a messenger from God</i>	masculine singular noun; accusative case	Strong's #32
meta (μετά) [pronounced <i>meht-AH</i>]	<i>with, among, in the company of, in the midst of</i>	preposition with the genitive	Strong's #3326
emou (ἐμοῦ) [pronounced <i>eh-MOO</i>]; mou (μου) [pronounced <i>moo</i>]	<i>me; of me; from me; my, mine</i>	1 st person singular pronoun, genitive/ablative case	Strong's #1473 (also, this is known as Strong's #3450; the simpler form of Strong's #1700)

Translation: Literally: ...for I do not know the day in this the Lord grants the angel with me. Less literally: ...for I will not know that day that the Lord will lead me by an angel.

The general idea is this: Barak knows that God has called upon him to lead Israel to victory against Jabin—he will buy into that—however, he has no idea when to attack, what to do, on which day he should move out; on which day he should hold up. He either is saying that he does not know when the Angel of the LORD will lead him and grant him success; or he does not know in what day he will be given the angel from Jehovah to lead him. I think the key to this verse is the idea that Barak simply does not know the time table; he does not know the *day* that God has assigned to him to move out against the Canaanites.

I believe that this portion of the verse is legitimate; that it was in the original manuscript, and lost over time. The Greek is not inspired text, per se, so we don't know how close the LXX translators got here, however, for the most part, their translation has been extremely accurate. My thinking is that this verse was barely readable, and that the translator did the best that he could with it. Assuming that, and assuming that I have properly interpreting this verse, it really helps this chapter to hang together. Here, Barak tells Deborah, "I do not know what day the angel of Jehovah will lead me [into battle]. Therefore, you must go with me" So Deborah will go with Barak. Barak gathers the troops, and then Deborah, when they are all together, ready to move out, she says, "Now this is the day that the Lord gives Jabin into your hands." And the chapter ends with, "And this day, Jehovah subdued Jabin before all Israel." In some ways, quite frankly, it is somewhat humorous.

On the opposing side: what if a translator just decided to stick this sentence in here, to make everything hold together nicely? We have several reasons why this is unlikely. (1) So far, for the most part, the Greek translation of the book of Judges is quite in line with the Masoretic text. It would be completely out of character for a translator to simply add a sentence to form a nice, literary whole. (2) The result of a translator simply adding a sentence would have been a very clear, easy to understand, Greek sentence, and not as confusing as this particular one. (3) The difficulty of this sentence points toward the more likely scenario of a translator doing the best that he can with a corrupted manuscript (where this portion is very difficult to read).

Let's take another position: let's assume that the translator was dealing with a manuscript where a copyist added this sentence for literary effect. This is also unlikely, and for very similar reasons: (1) More so than any ancient literature available to us, copyists were less likely to mess the Old Testament text. They revered this as the Word of God, and did not treat it lightly. Although we do find additions now and again which were made to original manuscripts (Mark 16:9–20 is a conspicuous example), this is quite rare; and adding an innocuous phrase is even less likely (i.e., a phrase without any doctrinal impact). (2) If this sentence had been added, it would have made more sense, and the translation of this sentence would have made more sense. Again, the most likely scenario is, this sentence was very difficult to read—there may have been just a couple of letters which were difficult to make out—and that would be enough to where the essential portions of this verse were translated, and the translator took his best, educated guess with what he could not read, resulting in a very difficult and clumsy sentence.

Let me point out one more thing: 99% of you reading this would have no idea that this is even an issue. The NKJV, the Emphasized Bible, and the NRSV are the best Bibles when it comes to offering up the alternate readings—not one of these Bibles footnotes this verse to offer up this sentence. The Book of the Judges in the Dead Sea Scrolls is very incomplete, and there is no text until Judges 6, so it is not found in there either.²⁹ I am not even aware of any commentators other than Clarke who offer up a comment here.³⁰ I am curious as to whether the Alexandrian Septuagint has this sentence in it. As is often the case, the Peshitta and Latin Vulgate are in agreement with the Masoretic text.

Clarke is one of the few commentators who speaks to this addition: *...he appears to mean, that although he was certain of a Divine call to this work, yet, as he knew not the time in which it would be proper for him to make the attack, he wishes that Deborah, on whom the Divine Spirit constantly rested, would accompany him to let him know when to strike that blow, which he knew would be decisive. This was quite natural, and quite reasonable, and is no impeachment whatever of Barak's faith. St. Ambrose and St. Augustine have the same reading; but it is found in no manuscript nor in any other of the versions.*³¹ However, I beg to differ with Clarke on the impeachment of faith, as Deborah will below indicate that his glory would be supplanted by a woman. If what Barak was requesting was fine, then there would be no reason for her to add this.

²⁹ Judges 6 is not the beginning of the book of Judges for the Dead Sea Scrolls; apparently, the pages prior to this did not survive.

³⁰ Clarke does understand how this verse is tied to the rest of this chapter. Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:14. The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge also mentions this, but it seems to come out of the blue. That is, they refer back to this quotation, but do not tell us that it comes from the LXX. *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-Sword, Judges 4:14.

³¹ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:9.

In any case, despite Barak's original faltering here, he is still listed as one of the great men of the faith in Heb. 11:32–34: **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 sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.**

Application: I don't want to come down too hard on Barak, considering that I doubt that I could do any better; however, I do want to make this point: there are some events which occur once, and there are no do-overs. This is one of those events. Barak will throw off the reigns of Jabin just this once—he could trust God completely or very nearly completely. My point being, now and again, you are going to come to places in your life where you've got one shot at getting it right. There will be do-overs now and again (which is part of the reason we are tested); but there will also come circumstances and events in our lives where we have one shot to get it right.

Application: We may wonder from time to time, why are we tested? What is the meaning of that? In the Spirit, when we respond to God's testing, that counts as divine good. Sometimes, there are people who observe this in us; and always, there are angels who observe us. That counts as divine good. However, as we find in this situation, there are going to be one-time events to which we must respond, and only through previous testing and guidance will we know what to do. We don't know anything about Barak's past (or Deborah's for that matter); but there is no reason to assume that Barak is some arbitrary person that walked by Deborah, and she decides, "Okay, let's go with this guy; he'll probably do okay." Doubtless, God has worked in Barak's life up until this point in time, preparing him for this day. Had Deborah walked up to you or me and proposed such a thing, we might have acted as if we did not hear her and hurried on. However, Barak, despite this one shortcoming, is up to God's calling.

What's wrong with this picture? What is wrong with Barak asking Deborah to go with him to provide further guidance? After all, she is a prophetess, and Barak would not know he is to deliver Israel apart from her.

What is Wrong with Barak Asking Deborah to Accompany him in Battle?

1. Deborah is the prophetess of God; if God needed for her to be with Barak, that would have been part of her instructions to Barak. She would have said, "Oh, by the way, Barak, I am going to go with you when you go to war against the Canaanites."
2. Barak is confused as to his function and Deborah's function. Deborah has responsibilities right where she is. She is a judge in Israel and she is a prophetess of God. She needs to tend to the things which God has given to her.
3. Deborah has given Barak the big picture already: "**Gather 10,000 men from Naphtali and Zebulun and go march to Mount Tabor.**" This is all the guidance he needs. He will not micro manage those who are below him; and he should not expect Deborah to micro manage him.
4. Barak is a general; he will gather up 10,000 men from 2 tribes, indicating that he has leadership ability and stature. You will note that Barak does not ask Deborah to tell him which men to bring; he does not ask Deborah what weapons each man should bring; he does not ask Deborah if everyone should wear a purple tee-shirt reading, "Go Israel" on it. Being a military man, Barak makes normal military decisions.
5. Barak knows how to go to Naphtali and Zebulun and he knows what to do when it comes to gathering troops. He obviously has some sort of a chain of command in place, and he does not micro-manage. He does not personally interview each of these 10,000 soldiers.
6. Barak is making military decisions and he is allowing those below him on the chain of command to make military decisions in preparation for battle. None of this requires Deborah to weigh in on. She is not needed for these military decisions.
7. Deborah is a woman; there is no need to expose her to the bloodshed of a war; there is no reason to expose her to the danger of a battle. This is not her place.
8. Barak probably has to assign a few of his men to stand guard over Deborah during the battle.
9. *When* Barak should attack is a military decision; he should have been able to make a military decision, since everything which takes him to this point is based upon military decisions.
10. As a prophetess, Deborah is to relay to Barak God's commands to him; as a general over the Israeli army, Barak is to make all of the military decisions which takes him from point A (where Deborah and he speak)

What is Wrong with Barak Asking Deborah to Accompany him in Battle?

- to point B (Mount Tabor with 10,000 men). Deborah has given him all the information that he needs.
11. Essentially, Barak is showing that he has doubts about Deborah, doubts about God; and, if he dies in this resistance to Canaan, he does not want to die alone.
 12. Reading between the lines, Barak is really saying, "Okay, if you are so sure about this, then you go with me to Mount Tabor."

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And so she said, "Going, I will go with you. Nevertheless, it will not be your glory upon the way which you, [even] you are going; for into a hand of a woman will sell Y^howah Sisera." And so arose Deborah and so she went with Barak [to] Kedesh.

Judges
4:9

Then she said, "I will definitely go with you. However, it will not be your glory on the way that you, [even] you are going; for, Y^howah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah arose and she went with Barak [to] Kedesh.

So she answered, "I will consent to go with you; however, you will not be fully honored for your actions, as Jehovah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	She said to him: I will go, indeed, with you, but at this time the victory shall not be attributed to you, because Sisera shall be delivered into the hand of a woman. Debbora therefore arose, and went with Barac to Cedes.
Masoretic Text	And so she said, "Going, I will go with you. Nevertheless, it will not be your glory upon the way which you, [even] you are going; for into a hand of a woman will sell Y ^h owah Sisera." And so arose Deborah and so she went with Barak [to] Kedesh.
Peshitta	And she said, "I will surely go with you; however, you will not glory on account of the journey which you are taking, for the Lord will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman." And Deborah arose and went with Barak to Rakim.
Septuagint	And she said, I will surely go with you; but know that your honour will not attend on the expedition on which you go, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hands of a woman: and Debbora arose, and went with Barac out of Cades.

Significant differences: Some of the phrasing in the middle is difficult, both in the Hebrew and the Greek. There appear to be no significant differences here.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	"All right, I'll go!" she replied. "But I'm warning you that the LORD is going to let a woman defeat Sisera, and no one will honor you for winning the battle." Deborah and Barak left for Kedesh.
<i>The Message</i>	She said, "Of course I'll go with you. But understand that with an attitude like that, there'll be no glory in it for you. GOD will use a woman's hand to take care of Sisera." Deborah got ready and went with Barak to Kedesh.

NLT	“Very well,” she replied, “I will go with you. But since you have made this choice, you will receive no honor. For the LORD’s victory over Sisera will be at the hands of a woman.”
REB	‘Certainly I shall go with you,’ she said, ‘but this venture will bring you no glory, because the LORD will leave Sisera to fall into the hands of a woman.’
TEV	She answered, “All right, I will go with you, but you won’t get any credit for the victory, because the LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God’s Word™	Deborah replied, "Certainly, I'll go with you. But you won't win any honors for the way you're going about this, because the LORD will use a woman to defeat Sisera." So Deborah started out for Kedesh with Barak.
HCSB	"I will go with you," she said, "but you will receive no honor on the road you are about to take, because the LORD will sell Sisera into a woman's hand." So Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

WEB	She said, I will surely go with you: notwithstanding, the journey that you take shall not be for your honor; for Yahweh will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.
Young’s Updated LT	And she says, “I do certainly go with you; only, surely your glory is not on the way which you are going, for into the hand of a woman does Jehovah sell Sisera;” and Deborah rises and goes with Barak to Kedesh.

What is the gist of this verse? Deborah agrees to accompany Barak; but warns him that his glory would be usurped by a woman (which is, apparently, a prophetic warning).

Judges 4:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong’s #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

Judges 4:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>The infinitive absolute can act as a noun, a verb or an adverb. It takes the part of a noun, but with another verb (which may or may not be in the same stem), and it intensifies the verb's meaning, where it functions either as a complement of affirmation, and therefore translated <i>surely</i> or <i>indeed</i>; or it may act as a complement of condition, and therefore be translated <i>at all, freely</i> or <i>indeed</i>.³² It's primary use when found before its verb is to strengthen or emphasize. Its use does not simply intensify the meaning of a verb, as would a Piel, but applies an intensification to the entire phrase. Therefore, the infinitive absolute strengthens the note of certain in affirmations and in promises or threats, and of contrast in adversative or concessionary statements, while it reinforces any sense of supposition or doubt or volition present in conditional clauses or questions or wishes. For this reason, it is a characteristic of grammar generally not found in the narrative. This would be used in speech and in letters in order to make a point. The use of the English adverbs <i>indeed, surely, of course, even, really, at all</i> or by the addition of the modals <i>should, could, must, may</i> might catch the nuance, but actually are often unnecessarily strong.³³</p>			
hâlak ^o (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^o</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

Translation: Then she said, "I will definitely go with you. Though she is willing to accompany Barak, this does not mean that Deborah has a high opinion of Barak, but rather, her trust is in the Word of God, which she received.

Judges 4:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿepheç (עֲפֵחַ) [pronounced <i>EH-fes</i>]	<i>ends, extremities, extremity, extreme limits; ceasing</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #657 BDB #67
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
ʿEpeç followed by the kîy conjunction mean <i>only that, simply; however, nevertheless; save that, however</i> .			
lôʾ (לֹא or לֹאֵל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

³² Paraphrased from *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 2277.

³³ Quoted or paraphrased from J.C.L. Gibson, *Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar~Syntax*; 4th Edition, © T&T Clark Ltd., 1994, pp. 123–124.

Judges 4:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
tîph ^ê ârâh (תִּפְאָרָה) [pronounced <i>tif-aw-RAW</i>]	<i>splendor, beauty, ornament; glory, glorying</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8597 BDB #802
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>ǵahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
derek ^ê (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced <i>DEH-rek^ê</i>]	<i>way, distance, road, path; journey, course; direction, towards; manner, habit, way [of life]; of moral character</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1870 BDB #202
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʾattâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced <i>ahT-TAW</i>]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
hâlak ^ê (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^ê</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

Translation: *However, it will not be your glory on the way that you, [even] you are going;...* Deborah did not suggest that she come along with Barak; that is his insistence. She warns him here, this lack of trust in God's Word means he will not receive the honor which would be due him for such an heroic act.

Judges 4:9c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
b ^ê (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{êh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
This combination of the bêyth preposition and <i>hand</i> literally means <i>in [the] hand of</i> ; and can be rendered <i>in the power of</i> ; <i>by the power of</i> ; <i>with</i> ; <i>through</i> ; <i>by</i> ; <i>by means of</i> ; <i>before</i> ; <i>in the sight of</i> .			
ʾîshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAWH</i>]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #802 BDB #61

Judges 4:9c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mâkar (מָכַר) [pronounced <i>maw-KAHR</i>]	<i>to sell, to sell [betroth] [a daughter]; to sell [deliver over] [a people]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect; with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #4376 BDB #569
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ʿêth (תָּא) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Çîyç ^e râʾ (אָרְסֵרָא) [pronounced <i>sees^e-RAW</i>]	<i>battle array</i> [according to BDB]; and is transliterated <i>Sisera</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #5516 BDB #696

Translation: ...for, Y^ehowah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.” Here is what is going to happen: Barak and his army will be defeating Jabin and Sisera; Sisera will escape and later be killed by a woman, Jael. What I believe Deborah means here is, had Barak simply believed her and just gone ahead and did as she said, then all Israel, during his generation, would venerate him for this deed; however, what is going to be the talk of the town is how this woman, Jael, tricks Sisera, the most feared general in Israel, and kills him. You see, Barak is listed among the heroes of the faith (Heb. 11:32)—so he has eternal reward and honor; however, during his own life, his defeat of Jabin will be eclipsed by Jael’s killing of Sisera.

I recall hearing a story on Paul Harvey’s *the rest of the story*; but I could not find it on the web, so I may get the details wrong. Paul Harvey told about an athlete who trained hard, went to the Olympics, and broke the record for his event; however, no one remembers who this man was, because he came in second place. First place was Jesse Owens, who eclipsed this record-breaker by doing even better. Having the exact facts here would probably drive this point home; but, the general idea is, Barak’s contemporaries would look back on this time in history, and what they would recall would be Jael, this woman who kills the most feared general of their time; Barak’s victory over Jabin and Sisera will be a veritable footnote.

Judges 4:9d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qûwm (קָוַם) [pronounced <i>koom</i>]	<i>to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
D ^e bôwrâh (דְּבוֹרָה) [pronounced <i>d^{eb}-voh-RAW</i>],	<i>bee; transliterated Deborah</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1683 BDB #184

Translation: *Then Deborah arose...* Deborah will go with Barak. However, bear in mind that this is God's second best. That is, Deborah consents to go with Barak; but this is not God's directive will—otherwise she would have offered.

Application: We all have different spiritual gifts. We all play different positions on the team. What I do and what Charlie Brown does may seem entirely unrelated, but we are different parts of the same body functioning, ideally, as God would want. In our example, Deborah has a position in Israel—she is a judge and a prophetess, and that is where she belongs. She does not belong with Barak chasing down Jabin or Sisera. It is not that her life is in danger, but that God has other things for her to do. Barak is taking her from that.

Application: What personally interests me is a careful examination of the Old Testament. I enjoy doing that. I know a friend of a brother of mine who can give the gospel, person to person, without being offensive or off-putting. Personally, I have a very difficult time doing that, and, sometimes, I am a little jealous of this gift. I don't always interact well with other people; and I often give off an attitude. I've been told this by others. However, luckily, not all of us are called to be evangelists; not all of us are called to be exegetes; not all are called to be pastor-teachers. We all have our gifts; and God has placed us where these gifts will function. We do not need to be concerned that we have this gift and not that gift; we do not have to be concerned when we see another believer do something so much better than we can.

In our illustration here, Deborah belongs where she belongs—judging and speaking the Word of God. Barak belongs on the battlefield. They intersect here, but this should be the end of it. However, Barak can't handle that himself. He thinks that he needs to pull Deborah away from her responsibilities to guide him. However, after receiving his marching orders, Barak needs nothing else from Deborah. Let's say, for instance, that Barak really needs to know on which day he should attack; Deborah is right there in front of him; so all he needs to do is ask. She does not need to go with him.

Judges 4:9e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
Bârâq (בָּרַק) [pronounced <i>baw-RAWK</i>]	<i>lightening, lightening flash; transliterated Barak</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #1301 BDB #140
Qedesh (קִדְשׁ) [pronounced <i>KEH-desh</i>]	<i>sanctuary; set apart; transliterated Kedesh</i>	masculine singular, proper noun; with the directional hê	Strong's #6943 BDB #873

Translation: *...and she went with Barak [to] Kedesh.* The last two words are *Barak* and *Kedesh*. Most translations render this as *went with Barak to Kedesh* (KJV, NKJV, NASB, the NIV). However, there is no intervening preposition. We can deduce that this is what is meant by the next verse (otherwise, this could have been *Barak of Kedesh*).

Now, we have discussed Barak's possible motivation for his actions. There will be no reward and no glory heaped upon Barak. He has been given a direct order by God and he will not go ahead with it apart from Deborah going

with him. It's not like she's his babe and he thinks that they should spend time together at work. She is displeased with him and the only reason that she does not leave him behind is that God ordered him to go. His chosen path is not one that will give him any immediate honor or glory; and the reason for this is that God will give the notoriety to a woman; and that woman will not be Deborah. Up until this time, all warfare has been fought by men; and suddenly, this man is so totally wimpified, that he requires a woman to go along to give him enough nerve to obey God's direct command.

Now, we may poke fun at the general wimpiness of Barak, but how many commands of God have you ignored or disobeyed? When it comes to giving, to not lusting in your heart, to delaying sex until marriage, to gossip, to mental attitude sins like fear and hatred—how many of these have you given into yourself. Barak has an area of weakness, yet God chose him above all other men of his generation to lead the army of Israel. That he had to take Deborah along? Pitiful; but don't get self-righteous about it. If we could observe your life story, *pitiful* might be one of the kindest adjectives that we could apply.

Barak should have clung to this promise: “When you go out to battle against your enemies and you see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for Jehovah your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt, is with you.” (Deut. 20:1). It is God who will give Barak the victory; not Deborah.

And so called Barak Zebulun and Naphtali [to] Kedesh and so he went up at his feet ten of a thousand men and so went up with him Deborah.

Judges
4:10

Then Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali [to] Kedesh, so he went up [with] 10,000 men at his feet; and Deborah went up with him.

Barak assembled the sons of Zebulun and Naphtali in Kedesh. 10,000 men followed him and Deborah went with him as well.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so called Barak Zebulun and Naphtali [to] Kedesh and so he went up at his feet ten of a thousand men and so went up with him Deborah.

eptuagint And Barac called Zabulon and Nephthali into of Cades, and there went up at his feet ten thousand men, and Debbora went up with him.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV ...where Barak called together the troops from Zebulun and Naphtali. Ten thousand soldiers gathered there, and Barak led them out from Kedesh. Deborah went too.

NLT At Kedesh, Barak called together the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, and ten thousand warriors matched up with him. Deborah also march with them.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ Barak called the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali together at Kedesh. Ten thousand men went to fight under his command. Deborah also went along with him.

HCSB Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; 10,000 men followed him, and Deborah also went with him.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV	And Barak called out Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh. And 10,000 men went up at his heels, and Deborah went up with him.
Young's Updated LT	And Barak calls Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh, and he goes up—at his feet are ten thousand men—and Deborah goes up with him.

What is the gist of this verse? Barak goes to the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali and musters 10,000 troops to go with him; Deborah accompanies him as well, as per his request.

Judges 4:10a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
zâ'âq (צָעַק) [pronounced zaw-GAHK]	<i>to cry out; to occasion a cry, to proclaim; to call, to call upon; to call together, to assemble</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #2199 BDB #277
Bârâq (בָּרַק) [pronounced baw-RAWK]	<i>lightening, lightening flash; transliterated Barak</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #1301 BDB #140
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Zêbûwûn (זֶבּוּלֹן) [pronounced zêb-oo-LOON]	<i>exalted, honored; transliterated Zebulun</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #2074 BDB #259
wê (or vê) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Naph ^{et} tâlîy (נַפְתָּלִי) [pronounced nahf ^{et} -taw-EE]	<i>wrestling; possibly cord, thread; twisted; transliterated Naphtali</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #5321 BDB #836
Qedesh (קֵדֶשׁ) [pronounced KĒH-desh]	<i>sanctuary; set apart; transliterated Kedesh</i>	masculine singular, proper noun; with the directional hê	Strong's #6943 BDB #873

Translation: *Then Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali [to] Kedesh,...* Barak is apparently a commanding figure. Who else could draw to himself 10,000 men? This indicates to me that he is well-known and has some military background.

We do not know the exact mechanics here—whether Barak sounded a trumpet to bring out the troops, or whether he sent messengers throughout these two tribes to gather this army.

Actually, several tribes are mentioned with regards to this advance against Sisera: Zebulun and Naphtali (Judges 4:10 5:14, 18); Ephraim and Benjamin (Judges 5:14); and Issachar (Judges 5:15). Just as notable,

several tribes did not participate: Dan, Asher, Gad and East Manasseh (Judges 5:17; the latter two tribes being called *Gilead* in this passage); and it appears as though Reuben did not participate (Judges 5:15). Now, you might be wondering if whether we don't have some sort of a contradiction here—that is, in v. 10, we have Barak organizing Zebulun and Naphtali, but in chapter 5 we have all of these additional tribes. The first, and least satisfying explanation is that, the calling of Zebulun and Naphtali did not preclude the calling of the other tribes. My problem with this explanation is, Deborah told Barak to gather men from these two tribes (Judges 4:6); so it seems unlikely that Barak would have gone to the other tribes as well—not initially. The more reasonable explanation is that this is the battle which broke the back of Jabin and set into motion the death of Sisera. There were only two tribes involved, and those were Naphtali and Zebulun. However, the campaign against Jabin continued, as is clearly stated in the final verse of this chapter. This is where the involvement of the other tribes would occur. The momentum was begun at the battle between Barak and Sisera, and the other tribes, inspired by this, added themselves to the battle against Jabin and the remainder of his forces (surely Sisera was not his only general and his only army). Sisera was the most prominent general of Jabin.

Judges 4:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿâlâh (הָלַח) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAWH</i>]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to come up, to rise, to climb</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
regel (רַגְלֵי) [pronounced <i>REH-ge!</i>]	<i>foot, feet</i>	feminine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7272 BDB #919
ʿasârâh (עֶשְׂרֵה) [pronounced <i>gah-saw-RAW</i>]	<i>ten</i>	feminine numeral	Strong's #6235 BDB #796
ʿălâphîym (אֲלָפִים) pronounced <i>uh-law-FEEM</i>	<i>thousands, families, [military] units</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #505 (and #504) BDB #48
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35

Translation: ...so he went up [with] 10,000 men at his feet;... None of the ten thousand suspect what a wimp Barak is. None of them realize that Deborah is there because he wouldn't go without her. We know this by Scripture, but Barak's men did not know this. They are assuming that Deborah is here because that is how she wants things done as a prophetess. They don't know the back story and probably never will, in their lifetimes, anyway.

Barak's army is 100% infantry; there are no chariots in Israel's army. These men follow Barak at his feet, indicating that he is on foot, as are they.

Judges 4:10c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿâlâh (הָלַח) [pronounced ġaw-LAWH]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to come up, to rise, to climb</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
D ^o bôwrâh (הַדְּבֹרָה) [pronounced d ^{eb} -vôh-RAW],	<i>bee; transliterated Deborah</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1683 BDB #184

Translation: ...and Deborah went up with him. Do you see the irony in this? Barak is leading this great army of 10,000, as per the will of God; but he has there as backup, Deborah the prophetess. When the soldiers of Israel observed this, I wonder what remarks they quietly made to one another. As mentioned above, perhaps they just assumed that this was what God directed her to do.

We don't get a complete view of the many judges that we come across in this book. We know little about Barak, except that he is simultaneously somewhat of a wimp, yet he had the charisma to call together several of the tribes of Israel against an army which had suppressed Israel for 20 years. We read this and take it for granted—and I even throw in a few disparaging remarks here and there—but, quite frankly, few men would have had the ability to lead several tribes of Israel into battle. Recall from chapter 1 that at least one generation of Israel fell down on the job with regards to taking the land given them by God. That is, Judah and Simeon proceeded with this process; but the other tribes did not. Therefore, for Barak to organize this movement is quite spectacular.

Application: Sometimes, it takes pressures and difficulties to bring out the best in people. I live in a neighborhood where many of my neighbors live like kings, materially speaking. One of the great issues before them is what will they do about a boat dock and how can they best enjoy it. However, rather than these neighbors being happy, friendly and kind, given their great blessings; I have found many of them to be angry, jealous, vicious, vindictive; and eager to spread rumors. The basic problem is, every single person has, from birth, exactly one old sin nature. Therefore, even though we think that life would be better if we had this or that luxury, we are no more happy with these things than without. And, when the old sin nature has full reign—in the case of the believer who is constantly out of fellowship, or the unbeliever—the actions, thoughts and words of such a one can indicate a soul in great crisis.

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Heber the Kenite

And so Heber the Kenite separated from [the] Kenite from sons of Hobab, father-in-law of Moses and so he pitched his tent as far as an oak in Zaananim that [was near] Kedesh.

Judges
4:11

Heber the Kenite was separated from the Kenites, from the sons of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses. He pitched his tent as far as the oak in Zaananim that [was near] Kedesh.

At this time, there was a Kenite named Heber who had separated himself from the other Kenites (the sons of Hobab, who was the father-in-law of Moses). He had pitched his tent near Kedesh by an oak in Zaanannim.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so Heber the Kenite separated from [the] Kenite from sons of Hobab, father-in-law of Moses and so he pitched his tent as far as an oak in Zaanannim that [was near] Kedesh.
Septuagint	And Chaber the Kenite had removed from Caina, from the sons of Jobab the father-in-law of Moses, and pitched his tent by the oak of the covetous ones, which is near Kedesh.

Significant differences: *Zaanannim* is the transliteration; *covetous ones* is the translation.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	At this time, Heber of the Kenite clan was living near the village of Oak in Zaanannim, not far from Kedesh. The Kenites were descendants of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses, but Heber had moved and had set up his tents away from the rest of the clan.
<i>The Message</i>	It happened that Heber the Kenite had parted company with the other Kenites, the descendants of Hobab, Moses' in-law. He was now living at Zaanannim Oak near Kedesh.
NLT	Now Heber the Kenite, a descendant of Moses' brother-in-law Hobab, had moved away from the other members of his tribe and pitched his tent by the Oak of Zaanannim, near Kedesh.
TEV	In the meantime Heber the Kenite had set up his tent close to Kedesh near the oak tree at Zaanannim. He had moved away from the other Kenites, the descendants of Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word™</i>	Heber the Kenite had separated from the other Kenites (the descendants of Hobab, Moses' father-in-law). Heber went as far away as the oak tree at Zaanannim near Kedesh and set up his tent.
HCSB	Now Heber the Kenite had moved away from the Kenites, the sons of Hobab, Moses' father-in-law, and pitched his tent beside the oak tree of Zaanannim, which was near Kedesh.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV	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.
Young's Updated LT	And Heber the Kenite has been separated from the Kenite, from the sons of Hobab father-in-law of Moses, and he stretches out his tent unto the oak in Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh.

What is the gist of this verse? To explain Sisera's actions, we are told about Heber the Kenite, who lives by Kedesh, separate from the other Kenites.

Judges 4:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
It is typical in the Hebrew for each sentence—in fact, each thought—to begin with a wâw consecutive in the Hebrew. However, it is not necessary in an English translation to include a connective at every such juncture, as our language does not necessarily require that for successive thoughts or actions.			
Cheber (חֶבֶר) [pronounced KHĒH ^B -ver]	<i>comrade; company, association; transliterated Heber, Cheber</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #2268 BDB #288
Qêynîy (קֵינִי) [pronounced kay-NEE]	<i>to acquire and is transliterated Kenite</i>	gentilic adjective with the definite article	Strong's #7017 BDB #884
pârad (פָּרַד) [pronounced paw-RAHD]	<i>to divide, to separate; to be divided, to be separated</i>	Niphal participle	Strong's #6504 BDB #825
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
Qêynîy (קֵינִי) [pronounced kay-NEE]	<i>to acquire and is transliterated Kenite</i>	gentilic adjective	Strong's #7017 BDB #884
The vowel point here is an a rather than a long ê.			
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
bânîym (בְּנִיִּם) [pronounced baw-NEEM]	<i>sons, descendants; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Chôbâb (חֹבָב) [pronounced khoh-BAWB ^V]	<i>cherished, love, loved; transliterated Hobab</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #2246 BDB #285
chôthên (חֹתֵן) [pronounced khoh-THAIN]	<i>father-in-law</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #2859 BDB #368
The relationship between Moses and Hobab is given by the masculine singular construct of chôthên (חֹתֵן) [pronounced khoh-THAIN], which means <i>father-in-law</i> . Owen calls this a masculine singular construct and The Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament calls it a verb—in particular, the Qal participle of the verb. It also gives the Hithpael infinitive of the same word as meaning <i>son-in-law</i> . Strong's #2859 BDB #368.			
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced moh-SHEH]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602

Translation: Heber the Kenite was separated from the Kenites, from the sons of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses. Here is quite the interesting *meanwhile, back at the ranch* kind of verses. Just flat out of nowhere, we begin talking about Heber, a Kenite, who seems to live out in the middle of nowhere and we don't know why. We will find out

soon enough why he is mentioned, and this is certainly known to the author of this chapter of the book of the Judges; but it seems to come out of left field as we are just reading along. Now, we examined the **Doctrine of the Kenites** recently, back in Judges 1:16. We concluded that the Kenites were a loose group of nomadic peoples who probably worked with metals and were originally associated with and possibly related to the Midianites (with respect to Moses' father-in-law, we may assume he comes from Kenites and Midianites both—Ex. 3:1 Num. 10:29 Judges 1:16).

Although the Kenites first settled in Midian (insofar as we know), some of them moved into Judah and then later into the Galilee area; and many of them became scribes. Their relations with Israel appear to have always been peaceful and congenial; and that this relationship went back as Abraham and Moses. Therefore, when God gives the Kenites into the hands of the descendants of Abraham, we should understand that Abraham's descendants would become predominant, but not necessarily that they militarily conquer the Kenites, as we have no indication of that in Scripture.

Heber is not a part of these 10,000 men, although he and his family are close enough to observe what is going on. Up until this time, he has maintained a position of neutrality, which was apparently respected by both the Israelites and the Canaanites. Heber lives close to where Barak and Deborah will go to begin organizing an army against Sisera. Given this proximity, Heber and his family will certainly know about what is going on.

Judges 4:11b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
It is typical in the Hebrew for each sentence—in fact, each thought—to begin with a wâw consecutive in the Hebrew. However, it is not necessary in an English translation to include a connective at every such juncture, as our language does not necessarily require that for successive thoughts or actions.			
nâṭâh (נָטָה) [pronounced <i>naw-TAWH</i>]	<i>to stretch out, to spread out, to bow, to extend, to incline, to turn</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5186 BDB #639
'ohel (אֹהֶל) [pronounced <i>OH-heh</i>]	<i>tent, tabernacle, house, temporary dwelling</i>	masculine singular noun with a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #168 BDB #13
'ad (עַד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i>]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
'êlôwn (אֵלוֹן) [pronounced <i>AY-loan</i>]	<i>oak, terebinth,³⁴ tall tree, a strong and hardy tree</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #436 BDB #18
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Tsa'ānannîym (צֹאֲנַנִּים) [pronounced <i>tsah-guh-nahn-NEEM</i>]	<i>removals, things removed; wanderers transliterated Zaananim, Zaanaim</i>	masculine plural, proper noun/location	Strong's #6815 BDB #858

³⁴ For those of you who did not know, a *terebinth* is an anacardiaceous tree, which trees are found in the Mediterranean region.

Judges 4:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
The translation <i>oaks of the wanderers</i> is given by Easton; but not suggested by BDB or Gesenius. Furthermore, we do not have a construct here, but a preposition instead. For this reason, I believe that <i>Zaanaim</i> should be seen as a proper noun, referring to a city or an area; and the <i>oak in Zaanannim</i> as a specific location in that area or city.			
Some suggest that the proper noun here includes the preposition, giving us <i>oak of Bitzanaim</i> (according to Easton ³⁵).			
ʾāsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʾēth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85
Together, ʾāsher ʾēth literally mean <i>which [is] with</i> . I'm not sure if there is a more specialized meaning. Other translations give the meanings <i>that [was] beside [it]; beside [it]; in [it]; along with [it]</i> .			
Owen lists this as the relative pronoun + the direct object (which reads exactly the same).			
Qedesh (קֵדֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>KEH-desh</i>]	<i>sanctuary; set apart; transliterated Kedesh</i>	masculine singular, proper noun; with the directional hê	Strong's #6943 BDB #873

Translation: He pitched his tent as far as the oak in Zaanannim that [was near] Kedesh. This must have been a magnificent oak, as it is mentioned in the border of Naphtali in Joshua 19:33 (since the singular is often used to stand for a large cluster of the same, it is possible that this was a huge field of oak trees).

There are varying opinions about the *oak in Zaanannim*. Some hold to the latter as a place or a city (a proper noun) and that *oak* probably refers to an area where there are a great many oaks (rather than one particular, spectacular oak). We find the singular used in this way a lot throughout the Old Testament.

Another opinion is that the *bēyth* preposition is not really a preposition, but a part of the proper noun, giving us *oak of Bitzanaim*, a place associated with the ruins of Bessum, found between Tiberius and Mount Tabor.³⁶ Part of the problem of locating it is, determining where Kedesh is. Recall that, some place Kedesh very near the Sea of Galilee (actually, Lake Huleh at this time); which is actually a place between the two different Kedesh's found in this passage.

In the reading which I have done, I doubt that anyone is going to be able to place this place with any degree of precision; even determining its proper name is probably impossible at this time. What we do know is, this is within walking/running distance from the Kishon River in the area of Mount Tabor. This is where Sisera's army will be soundly defeated, apparently, as much by God as by Barak.

³⁵ M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*; 1897; from e-Sword, topic: Zaanaim.

³⁶ M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*; 1897; from e-Sword, topic: Zaanaim.

All of this takes place near Kedesh, near Mount Tabor, around the Kishon River. Therefore, a map might be in order. This map, by the way, is not in the normal north south orientation. The Mediterranean Sea is in the upper right hand corner.

The Kishon River and Mount Tabor

The Kishon is a winding, a winter torrent of Central Palestine, which rises about the roots of Tabor and Gilboa, and passing in a northerly direction through the plains of Esdraelon and Acre, falls into the Mediterranean at the north-eastern corner of the bay of Acre, at the foot of Carmel. It is the drain by which the waters of the plain of Esdraelon and of the mountains that surround it find their way to the sea. It bears the modern name of Nahr el-Mokattah, i.e., "the river of slaughter" (comp. 1 Kings 18:40). In the triumphal song of Deborah (Judg. 5:21) it is spoken of as "that ancient river," either (1) because it had flowed on for ages, or (2), according to the Targum, because it was "the torrent in which were shown signs and wonders to Israel of old;" or (3) probably the reference is to the exploits in that region among the ancient Canaanites, for the adjoining plain of Esdraelon was the great battle-field of Palestine.

This was the scene of the defeat of Sisera (Judges 4:7, 13), and of the destruction of the prophets of Baal by Elijah (1 Kings 18:40). "When the Kishon was at its height, it would be, partly on account of its quicksands, as impassable as the ocean itself to a retreating army."

Beyond the Mount, it led by a rapid descent into a plain covered with corn and verdure, and extending in a width of some thirty miles, by a series of undulations, to the foot of Tabor, where it came to an end. Two side ranges running almost parallel—little Hermon and Gilboa—disposed in a line from east to west, and united by an almost imperceptibly rising ground, serve rather to connect the plain of Megiddo with the valley of the Jordan than to separate them. A single river, the Kishon, cuts the route diagonally—or, to speak more correctly, a single river-bed, which is almost waterless for nine months of the year, and becomes swollen only during the winter rains with the numerous torrents bursting from the hillsides. As the flood approaches the sea it becomes of more manageable proportions, and finally distributes its waters among the desolate lagoons formed behind the sand-banks of the open and wind-swept bay, towered over by the sacred summit of Carmel.



The first 2 paragraphs of text is taken from <http://dev.bible.org/netbible6b/dictionary.php?word=Kishon>

The 3rd paragraph of text comes from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/17324/17324-h/v4b.htm> (I think you have to actually download the book or go to the download site in order to get this). The text itself comes from the book *The History of Egypt, Chaldaea, Syria, Babylonia, and Assyria*, Volume 4 (of 12), written by Maspero, Gaston Camille Charles, 1846-1916.

This is a portion of a map taken from <http://www.bible.org/assets/netbible/map2.jpg>

Even through to the end of this chapter, there are several unanswered questions concerning Heber. Although he appears to be independent and neutral, the history of the Kenites has always been a close and warm one with Israel. Moses, as we have pointed out in studying Exodus and Numbers, appeared to get along better with his father-in-law than he did with his wife. And throughout Scripture, there have never been any recorded animosities between Israel and the Kenites. On the other hand, we tend to associate the Kenites with metal-working and we have the 900 chariots of Sisera. We don't know if there was some kind of a connection here or not. That is, we don't know if Heber had some sort of a contract with the Canaanites to build chariots for them. The NIV Study Bible suggests that Heber is the one who told Sisera about the preparations that Israel was making. Barnes also suggests that one of the Kenites³⁷ tells Sisera of Israel's military organization. The basis for this is the next verse. This also gives this verse a little more cohesiveness with regards to its place in this chapter. For this reason, we can possibly conclude that some of the Kenites (not necessarily Heber or his wife) inform Sisera of Israel's imminent attack; and we can infer that the Kenites were at least partially involved in the construction of the chariots which belonged to Sisera's army. The alternative is, Sisera's eyes and ears in this land observed Israel's gathering army and told Sisera.

The full explanation is, in my opinion, is, there are a few Kenites living in northern Israel, near Kedesh (Judges 4:11). They had moved here from the city of palms (Judges 1:16). When Jabin and Sisera impose their will over the Israelites, the Kenites took sides; and some remained neutral. This is how a group of people would normally react. Over time, Heber the Kenite had established a neutral position with regards to Jabin and Sisera. When Israel began gathering troops in Kedesh, some Kenites who supported the Canaanites, told Jabin. In fact, there may have been a previously established agreement in this regard. Over time, despite Heber's neutral position, he began to side more and more with Israel, after observing the oppression of the Canaanites. It is even possible that Heber separates from the Kenites in that area because of their political disagreements. This is all conjecture, but offers a complete back story to the events of this chapter.

To sum up, why are we told that Heber the Kenite is here?

Why Does the Bible Tell Us that Heber the Kenite Lives Here?

1. We first have to know what a Kenite is doing in this area. We find them in Judah and with the Midianites; but this is pretty far away. Bear in mind that, the Bible does not always tell us when this or that branch of this or that people leaves one place and goes to another. Sometimes, that is taken for granted.
2. We will need to understand how Sisera could be willing to go into the tent of Jael.
3. This verse sets us up for what will happen next, and implies that Kenites told Sisera that Barak was gathering his troops at Mount Tabor.
4. We can reasonably infer from the text that, even in ancient times, a group of people did not always fall lock-step into line. That is, the Kenites, as a whole, support Israel; however, Heber the Kenite seemed to, at least at first, take a neutral position with respect to Israel and the Canaanites.

Now, I am not sure whether there is some great spiritual lesson to be learned in all of this; sometimes, in Scripture, information is included simply to hold the narrative together. That is, there is no reason to think that you can take each and every verse out of the Bible and somehow apply it to your life and lead your life by copying this verse. As we go through this chapter, we will find various areas of application; however, we cannot expect that with each and every verse.

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³⁷ Barnes assumes that Heber arrived with several families of Kenites.

And so they made known to Sisera that went up Barak ben Abinoam [to] a mountain of Tabor.

Judges
4:12

Sisera was informed [lit., then they made (it) known to Sisera] that Barak ben Abinoam went up [to] Mount Tabor.

Sisera had been informed that Barak, the son of Abinoam, had gone up to Mount Tabor.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so they made known to Sisera that went up Barak ben Abinoam [to] a mountain of Tabor.

Septuagint And it was told Sisara that Barac the son of Abineem was gone up to mount Thabor.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV When Sisera learned that Barak had led an army to Mount Tabor,...

NLT When Sisera was told that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor,...

TEV When Sisera learned that Barak head gone up to Mount Tabor,...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ The report reached Sisera that Barak, son of Abinoam, had come to fight at Mount Tabor.

HCSB It was reported to Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up Mount Tabor.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV When Sisera was told that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor,...

WEB They told Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to Mount Tabor.

Young's Updated LT And they declare to Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam has gone up to mount Tabor.

What is the gist of this verse? Sisera is told that Barak has gathered Israeli troops up in Mount Tabor.

Judges 4:12			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgad (נִגַּד) [pronounced naw-GAHD]	to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
lâmed (לְ) (pronounced lə)	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Judges 4:12

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Çîyç ^e râ ^ʾ (סִיִּצְרָא) [pronounced sees ^e -RAW]	<i>battle array</i> [according to BDB]; and is transliterated <i>Sisera</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #5516 BDB #696
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
ʿâlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced ġaw-LAWH]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to come up, to rise, to climb</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
Bârâq (בָּרַק) [pronounced baw-RAWK]	<i>lightening, lightening flash; transliterated Barak</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #1301 BDB #140
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
ʿĂbîynô ^ʿ am (אָבִינֹעַם) [pronounced u ^b -vee-noh-ÇAHM]	<i>my father is a delight; father of pleasantness; transliterated Abinoam</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #42 BDB #4
har (הַר) [pronounced har]	<i>hill; mountain, mount; hill-country</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #2042 (and #2022) BDB #249
Tâbôwr (תְּבוֹר) [pronounced taw-BOHR]	<i>mound; and is transliterated Tabor</i>	Proper noun/location	Strong's #8396 BDB #1061

Translation: *Sisera was informed* [lit., *then they made (it) known to Sisera*] *that Barak ben Abinoam went up [to] Mount Tabor.* The first verb in this verse is the 3rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect of *to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to declare, to inform, to make it pitifully obvious that.* The plural would indicate that several Kenites told Sisera what was going on with Israel (this would be my theory). So Sisera has his forces off in Harosheth-hagoyim and he was told that Barak had taken a substantial force to Mount Tabor, which was on the border of the tribe of Issachar (Joshua 19:22).

Mount Tabor

The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge reads: *Mount Tabor, called by the Arabs Djebel Tour, is almost entirely insulated, and rises up in the plain of Esdraelon, about six miles from Nazareth, in a conical form, somewhat like a sugar-loaf. Josephus states its height to be thirty stadia, with a plain of 26 stadia in circumference on its top, on which was formerly a city, which was used as a military post. It is described as an exceedingly beautiful mountain, having a rich soil, producing excellent herbage, and adorned with groves and clumps of trees.*¹



¹ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Judges 4:14.

² The picture comes from <http://www.jnf-canada.org/EDUCATIONSITE/jnf/galil/bible/bibgeography.htm>

We are getting a lot of geography here, and you may wonder why; or, more likely, you may not care. The relative positions of Barak, his army; and Sisera actually play an important part in this battle. Barak begins on Mount Tabor with his army (see the picture to the right). Sisera will bring his 900 chariots to the valley below, near the Torrent of Kishon (sometimes called the Brook Kishon). As previously described, Kishon is this winding river which begins in about this area, and is called everything from a brook to a torrent, depending upon the time of the year. A sudden rain on Mount Tabor or in the valley, or to any place which feeds the Kishon could change things considerably. On a dry valley, Sisera and his chariots will be victorious over an army on foot. However, if the ground turns to mush, if the chariots are immobilized; if the banks of the Kishon overflow, then we have a completely different story.

By the way, we will only be given the barest of details in this chapter about the battle between Barak and Sisera; most of the rest of the chapter will focus on Jael and Sisera. However, we will be told that Jehovah will route Sisera's army; in the next chapter, we will be told that this was done by an earthquake and a rainstorm (Judges 5:4–5). This would have been a fascinating battle to observe!

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The Battle Between Barak and Sisera

Judges 5:19–24

And so called Sisera all of his chariots—nine hundred chariots of iron—and all the people who [were] with him from Harosheth-hagoiim unto a brook of Kishon.

Judges
4:13

Therefore Sisera called all his chariots—nine hundred chariots of iron—and all the people who [were] with him from Harosheth-hagoiim to the brook Kishon.

So Sisera summoned all of his 900 iron chariots along with all the soldiers who were with him from Harosheth-hagoiim and they gathered at the torrent Kishon.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so called Sisera all of his chariots—nine hundred chariots of iron—and all the people who [were] with him from Harosheth-hagoiim unto a brook of Kishon.
Septuagint	And Sisara called all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron and all the people with him, from Arisoth of the Gentiles to the brook of Kison.
Significant differences:	No significant differences— <i>hagoiim</i> is the transliteration; <i>the Gentiles</i> is the translation.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	...he called his troops together and got all nine hundred iron chariots ready. Then he led his army away from Harosheth-Ha-Goiim to the Kishon River.
NLT	...he called for all nine hundred of his iron chariots and all of his warriors, and they marched from Harosheth-hagoyim to the Kishon River.
TEV	...he called out his nine hundred iron chariots and all his men, and sent them from Harosheth-of-the-Gentiles to the Kishon River.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	So Sisera summoned all his chariots (900 chariots made of iron) and all his troops from Harosheth Haggoyim to come to the Kishon River.
HCSB	Sisera summoned all his 900 iron chariots and all the people who were with him from Harosheth of the Nations to the Wadi Kishon.
JPS (Tanakh)	So Sisera ordered all his chariots—nine hundred iron chariots—and all the troops he had to move from Harosheth-goïim to the Wadi Kishon.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV	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.
WEB	Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people who were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles, to the river Kishon.
Young's Updated LT	And Sisera calls all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people who are with him, from Haroshes of the Goyim, unto the brook Kishon.

What is the gist of this verse? Sisera gathers his army and his 900 chariots, and he goes out to the river Kishon, which would be below Mount Tabor.

Judges 4:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
zâ'âq (צָאָק) [pronounced zaw-GAHK]	to cry out; to occasion a cry, to proclaim; to call, to call upon; to call together, to assemble	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #2199 BDB #277

Judges 4:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
צִיָּצְרָאֵ (אֲרָסִיִּי) [pronounced sees ^e -RAW]	<i>battle array</i> [according to BDB]; and is transliterated <i>Sisera</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #5516 BDB #696
ֶֿעֶת (תֶּֿא) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
כֹּל (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
recheb (רֶכֶב) [pronounced REH-khe ^b V]	<i>chariot, mill-stone, rider</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7393 BDB #939
têsha ^ḥ (תֵּשַׁח) [pronounced TAY-shah ^ḡ]	<i>nine, ninth</i>	masculine singular noun; ordinal or cardinal numeral	Strong's #8672 BDB #1077
mê ^ḥ ôwth (מֵאוֹת) [pronounced may-AW]	<i>hundreds</i>	feminine plural numeral	Strong's #3967 BDB #547
recheb (רֶכֶב) [pronounced REH-khe ^b V]	<i>chariot, mill-stone, rider</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7393 BDB #939
bar ^e zel (בַּרְזֶל) [pronounced bār ^e -ZEL]	<i>iron</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1270 BDB #137

Translation: Therefore, Sisera called all his chariots—nine hundred chariots of iron—... Sisera calls, of course, not the chariots themselves, but the men who rode in the chariots.

Matthew Henry tells us a little about these chariots: *Sisera's confidence was chiefly in his chariots; therefore particular notice is taken of them, 900 chariots of iron, which, with the scythes fastened to their axle-trees, when they were driven into an army of footmen, did terrible execution. So ingenious have men been in inventing methods of destroying one another, to gratify those lusts from which come wars and fightings.*³⁸ The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge gives us roughly the same description: *Probably chariots armed with iron scythes, projecting from the axle on each side, by which the infantry might be easily cut down or thrown into confusion. The ancient Britons are said to have had such chariots.*³⁹

³⁸ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:10–16.

³⁹ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Judges 4:13.

Judges 4:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿêth (תָּא) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʿam (אָמ) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
ʿăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʿêth (תָּא) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85
Together, ʿăsher ʿêth literally mean <i>which [is] with</i> . I'm not sure if there is a more specialized meaning. Other translations give the meanings <i>that [was] beside [it]; beside [it]; in [it]; along with [it]</i> .			
Owen lists this as the relative pronoun + the direct object (which reads exactly the same).			
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
Chărôsheth (חֲרוֹשֶׁת) [pronounced <i>khuh-roh-SHETH</i>]	<i>woodland; magic drug, magic art; transliterated Harosheth</i>	proper singular noun/location	Strong's #2800 BDB #361
gôwyîm (גּוֹיִם) [pronounced <i>goh-YEEM</i>]	<i>Gentiles, [Gentile] nation, people, peoples, nations</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #1471 BDB #156
ʿel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>e</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
nachal (נַחַל) [pronounced <i>NAHKH-al</i>]	<i>brook, torrent</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5158 BDB #636
Qîyshôwn (קִישׁוֹן) [pronounced <i>kee-SHOWN</i>]	<i>winding, curving, twisted; torturous transliterated Kishon</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #7028 BDB #885

Translation: ...and all the people who [were] with him from Harosheth-hagoiim to the brook Kishon. The use of one noun to stand in for another is called a metonym. The second group that he called was the masculine singular of *people*. Josephus tells us that there are 300,000 troops with Sisera.⁴⁰ We do not know if that is true; but, no doubt, he had a very large army in addition to these chariots.

The word which precedes Kishon is the masculine construct of nachal (נַחַל) [pronounced *NAHKH-a/*], which means *brook, torrent*. Now, it is quite obvious that a brook is much different from a torrent. No one would think twice about attempting to cross over a lazy brook; however, a torrent is quite a different matter. The same word is used for both because the Kishon River could be either. Strong's #5158 BDB #636.

Harosheth-hagoiim is mentioned only here and in v. 16. It is a Canaanite town which sprung up after the capture of the Land of promise by Israel. This is where Sisera organized his men from, and it was probably in the valley beneath Mount Carmel, not too far from the sea. He will advance his troops along the Kishon river, along the valley, to where the waters of Megiddo are, which feed into the Kishon River. Israel will eventually force him back to this point of origin (v. 16).

This great valley between the Kishon River and Mount Tabor was an ideal place for Sisera to war from, considering his 900 chariots—ideal for a dry day. As God had promised, He had lured Sisera to Barak and his troops. What seems to be implied, but never outright stated, is that during the battle or immediately previous to the battle, there is a terrific rainstorm. My thinking is, this storm began just as the battle began. Keep that in mind as we go through the next few verses.

And so said Deborah unto Barak, “Rise up for this the day which has given Y^ehowah Sisera into your hand. Does not Y^ehowah go out before your faces?” And so went down Barak from a mountain of Tabor and ten of thousands of men after him.

Judges
4:14

Then Deborah said to Barak, “Rise up for this [is] the day [in] which Y^ehowah has given Sisera into your hand. Does not Y^ehowah go out before you?” So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men following him.

Then Deborah ordered Barak, “Now rise up and take a stand, for this is the day in which Jehovah has given Sisera into your hand. Hasn’t Jehovah already gone out before you?” So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men after him.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so said Deborah unto Barak, “Rise up for this the day which has given Y ^e howah Sisera into your hand. Does not Y ^e howah go out before your faces?” And so went down Barak from a mountain of Tabor and ten of thousands of men after him.
Septuagint	And Debbora said to Barac, “Rise up, for this is the day on which the Lord has delivered Sisara into your hand. Behold, does not the Lord go forth before you?” And Barac went down from mount Thabor, and ten thousand men after him.

Significant differences: No significant differences; *before your faces* in the Hebrew can be reasonably shortened to *before you*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

⁴⁰ I got this from Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:13; he takes it from Josephus, *Antiquities*, I. 5. c. 5. sect. 1.

CEV	Deborah shouted, "Barak, it's time to attack Sisera! Because today the LORD is going to help you defeat him. In fact, the LORD has already gone on ahead to fight for you." Barak led his ten thousand troops down from Mount Tabor.
<i>The Message</i>	Deborah said to Barak, "Charge! This very day GOD has given you victory over Sisera. Isn't GOD marching before you?" Barak charged down the slopes of Mount Tabor, his ten companies following him.
NLT	Then Deborah said to Barak, "Get ready! Today the LORD will give you victory over Sisera, for the LORD is marching ahead of you." so Barak led his ten thousand warriors down the slopes of Mount Tabor into battle.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word™</i>	Then Deborah said to Barak, "Attack! This is the day the LORD will hand Sisera over to you. The LORD will go ahead of you." So Barak came down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men behind him.
HCSB	Then Deborah said to Barak, "Move on, for this is the day the LORD has handed Sisera over to you. Hasn't the LORD gone before you?" So Barak came down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men following him.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV	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.
LTHB	And Deborah said to Barak, Rise up, for this is the day in which Jehovah has given Sisera into your hand. Has not Jehovah gone out before you? And Barak went down from Mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.
Young's Updated LT	And Deborah says unto Barak, "Rise, for this is the day in which Jehovah has given Sisera into your hand; has not Jehovah gone out before you?" And Barak goes down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.

What is the gist of this verse? Deborah tells Barak, "This is the day in which Jehovah has given Sisera into your hand." Barak leads his men from Mount Tabor to go to meet Sisera.

Judges 4:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
D ^o bôwrâh (דְּבוּרָה) [pronounced <i>d^{eb}-vôh-RAW</i>],	<i>bee; transliterated Deborah</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1683 BDB #184
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>el</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Judges 4:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Bârâq (בָּרַק) [pronounced <i>baw-RAWK</i>]	<i>lightening, lightening flash; transliterated Barak</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #1301 BDB #140
qûwm (קָוַם) [pronounced <i>koom</i>]	<i>to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #6965 BDB #877

Translation: Then Deborah said to Barak, “Rise up... Then Deborah says to Barak, *stand, rise up, take a stand*. This has nothing to do with moving to a higher elevation or with going north on a map. Barak is the general of the Israeli forces; however, it is Deborah who is giving him the orders.

Judges 4:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i>]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i>]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Çîyç ^e râ ^ʾ (צִיָּצְרָא) [pronounced <i>sees^e-RAW</i>]	<i>battle array</i> [according to BDB]; and is transliterated <i>Sisera</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #5516 BDB #696
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

Judges 4:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun, pausal form; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

This combination of the bêyth preposition and *hand* means *with you; through you, by you, by means of you; at your hand* [i.e., *before your, in your sight*].

Translation: ...for this [is] the day [in] which Y^howah has given Sisera into your hand. Sisera has just gathered his troops below, in the valley of the Kishon River; Barak is with his troops on Mount Tabor. Deborah is there for the expressed purpose of telling him which day he should attack. So, she looks at Sisera and his army, just gathered below; back up to Barak and his nervous troops; and she tells him, "This is the day."

Let's put this into perspective:

Deborah says, "This is the Day!"

Scripture	Incident
Judges 4:8c	After Israel has been oppressed by the Canaanites for 20 years by Jabin and his general Sisera, Deborah, a prophetess, calls Barak and tells him that God has commanded him to take an army from the tribes and Naphtali and Zebulun and march to Mount Tabor, where God would give Sisera and the Canaanite army into his hand. Barak agrees to this, but only if Deborah accompanies him. He tells her, "I do not know which day God will lead me by the Angel."
Judges 4:14b	Barak has gathered his troops on Mount Tabor; Sisera and his army are gathered below in the valley of the brook Kishon. Deborah turns to Barak and says, "This is the day in which Jehovah has given Sisera into your hand." In essence, Deborah is saying, "Both of your armies have been gathered; that means it is time to go into battle."
Judges 4:23	Barak's men are victorious that day over Sisera's army, and just in case he was not 100% certain as to which day this occurred, God the Holy Spirit, inspired the author of this chapter to conclude: So God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan on that day.

When you see these 3 verses together, it is almost presented tongue-in-cheek. The proper day which God set for this—the day which Barak was confused about—is clearly presented to us and to Barak.

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The verb *has given* is in the Qal perfect tense; Rotherham calls this the *prophetic perfect tense*; that is, it is spoken of as completed action, as, from God's vantage point, it has been completed.⁴¹ Barak clearly takes his orders from Deborah. Note that she does not appear to be participating in the fighting, nor would we expect her to. In fact, Barak probably will assign a couple of men to guard her during this battle.

⁴¹ I am certain that this designation is not original with Rotherham.

Judges 4:14c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hă (הַ) [pronounced <i>heh</i>]		interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied.	Strong's #none BDB #209
lô' (לֹא or לֹא') [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
yâtsâ' (אֵצֵא) [pronounced <i>yaw-TZAWH</i>]	<i>to go out, to come out, to come forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i>]	<i>face, faces countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Together, they mean *before you, before your face, in your presence, in your sight, in front of you*. When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning *in Your judgment*.

Translation: *Does not Y^ehowah go out before you?* God has already gone out on behalf of Barak and on behalf of Israel. It's a done deal. All Barak has to do is to go out and tidy up the details. *"It will be that Jehovah your God will cross ahead of you; He will destroy these nations before you and you will dispossess them."* (Deut. 31:3a). Or, *"Listen all of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says Jehovah to you: 'Do not fear or become disheartened because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's.'" (2Chron. 20:15; see also Deut. 9:3 Joshua 10:10–11 Psalm 68:7 2Sam. 5:24 2Chron. 20:16ff).*

Application: Now I know what you're thinking right now...*enough of Sisera, Deborah and Barak, let's talk about ME!* Every single day, you face trials and tribulations and problems and difficulties. For most of you, these problems are things which you originated and are mostly your fault. However, you will face a certain number of problems and difficulties which were not your doing. You will be persecuted, you will meet with animosity, you will get the short end of the stick, and, once and awhile, it is clearly out of the blue—it was not your fault. In these instances, bear in mind that God has gone before you; God has already fought the battle. God has taken care of all of your problems already. He knew about them in eternity past and He took care of them at that time. There will never be a problem, a difficulty, a trial, a battle, or anything which will occur in your life which catches God off-guard. Not one time will He look down from heaven at your life and remark, "What the hell? Who woulda thought *that* would happen? Now what the hell am I going to do about this?" God is not caught by surprise by our lives or anything which happens in our lives. Now, what we are to do in every circumstance varies. There is a time to fight, as we have here, and there is a time to flee, as we have in Matt 24:15–28 during the second half of the Great Tribulation. God has taken care of all of that and, generally speaking, He has provided clear indications as to what tact we are to take. So, now you're thinking, *no He hasn't; I haven't a clue*. This is where the filling of the Spirit (not a holy roller experience), Bible doctrine and obedience to His Word come into play. These are the most basic guidance factors

in the believer's life. You are either out of fellowship or you are in fellowship. You get out of fellowship by sinning (which you will do—I John 1:8, 10) and you get back into fellowship by naming your sins to God (1Cor. 11:31 1John 1:9). This is the difference between being filled with the Spirit and not filled; that is the key to being in or out of fellowship (John 16:13 2Cor. 13:14 1John 1:7). God's Word, not your feelings or some ecstatic experience, is your guidance. People who are guided by some experience or some feeling go off in a thousand different directions. You need objective teaching of the Word of God to guide you. Finally, don't think you can ignore God's directives in the big things and that not have an effect on the little things. There are clear directives give to us concerning drunkenness, sex outside of marriage, gossip, slander, and maligning. If we constantly disobey God in these major areas, how on earth do we expect guidance in the subtleties of life?

Application: Personally, I have made decisions concerning where I live (Texas instead of California), where I work (I've changed jobs from time to time); I've changed homes from time to time; and I have made decisions involving hundreds of thousands of dollars. Very rarely have I ever sweated out a decision. Very rarely have I spent days on end worrying about this or that decision; and then, after the fact, wondering whether or not I made the right decision. When you learn some doctrine; when you are filled with God the Holy Spirit; when you exhibit some obedience to God's mandates, making decisions in this life is pretty much a snap.

Application: These basics of the Christian life must be a part of your life. The result pervades your entire life. I must admit that, there are times when I am concerned because I don't have the *joy, joy, joy, down in my heart*; that is, I am not overly excited or overly happy. I'm not unhappy; but I certain do not live a life in ecstasies. However, when I come face to face with other people, I begin to recognize just how unhappy others are compared to me. I have one neighbor who threw a rock with a burning rag through the window of another neighbor—obviously, this person has to be extremely upset, emotional and unhappy to do such a thing. I could not imagine myself being so unhappy as to damage something which belongs to someone else; and certainly not to do something which puts lives at risk. To me this is insanity. I have a next door neighbor who, when improvements were being made on my house, came over and got in a swearing fit with my workmen. The changes in my house will increase the value of my house; improve the looks of my house; and, thereby, increase the value of her house, as well as the houses of everyone on my street. You would think, with this in mind, that she would be happy about all of this. She isn't; she is miserable. She has apparently spent the last few weeks spreading lies and rumors about me (or has believed various lies and rumors about me). Because I know that man is fallen, I am not completely surprised by these things. However, it does cause me to realize how much more content I am than many of my neighbors. By the way, my neighbors probably lead lives which would put them in the top 1 or 2% of the world, based on materialism; and yet, they aren't happy. They are not content. The old maxim, *money can't buy happiness* is absolutely true. These people have money, but they are not happy. They think that there is something which I can do; or something that someone else on the street can do; or someone else in the neighborhood can do, that will turn their frown upside down; but they are wrong.

Application: I had a close acquaintance many years ago who felt that, if she could just get a car and a house in a good neighborhood, that she would begin to be happy and feel fulfilled. Once she got those things, she was more unhappy than ever before. Your focus as a believer has to be on the Word of God; on the mandates of God; on getting into fellowship and staying there. There is no lasting happiness to be found in things; and there is no lasting happiness to be found in seeking personal pleasure.

I've gone pretty far afield here; let's get back into the battle:

Judges 4:14d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (t) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Judges 4:14d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced yaw-RAHD]	<i>to descend, to go down</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
Bârâq (בָּרַק) [pronounced baw-RAWK]	<i>lightening, lightening flash; transliterated Barak</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #1301 BDB #140
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
har (הַר) [pronounced har]	<i>hill; mountain, mount; hill-country</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #2042 (and #2022) BDB #249
Tâbôwr (תְּבוֹר) [pronounced taw-BOHR]	<i>mound; and is transliterated Tabor</i>	Proper noun/location	Strong's #8396 BDB #1061

Translation: [So Barak went down from Mount Tabor...](#) This entire battle is going to be described by narrative in about 2½ verses. We will get more details of the battle in the next chapter, where Deborah takes a poetic look back on these events.

We begin the battle with Barak coming down from Mount Tabor. I suspect that, by this time, it began to rain; and that there had been a terrific storm perhaps on the other side of Mount Tabor, which would find its way into the Brook Kishon, changing it into the Torrent Kishon.

Judges 4:14e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿasârâh (עֶשְׂרֵה) [pronounced gah-saw-RAW]	<i>ten</i>	feminine numeral	Strong's #6235 BDB #796
ʿâlâphîym (אַלְפֵיַיִם) pronounced uh-law-FEEM]	<i>thousands, families, [military] units</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #505 (and #504) BDB #48
ʿîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
ʿachar (אַחַר) [pronounced ah-KHAHR]	<i>after, following, behind</i>	preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #310 BDB #29

Translation: ...with 10,000 men following him. It is interesting how war and battle have changed; Barak leads his men into battle. Now, I have given Barak a hard time up until this point; however, you must admire his bravery at this point, to charge the Canaanites, who are far superior to him with their chariots and possibly superior to him in manpower.

With Sisera and his army gathered below, there is no telling how long it would have taken them to form a strategy and to act on it. At this point, we simply have the gathering of the two armies and Barak chooses a head on attack. This certainly indicates some trust on the part of Barak, to charge as he has, as he may have had a better advantage from the hill. However, there is no telling how many troops Sisera had or if Sisera had additional troops on the way.

And so routed Y^ehowah Sisera and all of the chariots and all of the army to a mouth of a sword before faces of Barak and so Sisera got down from upon the chariot and he fled by his feet.

Judges
4:15

Y^ehowah routed Sisera and all of the chariots and all of the army with [lit., by] the edge of the sword before Barak. Sisera then got down from [his] chariot and he fled on foot [lit., by his feet].

Jehovah routed Sisera and his chariots and all of his armed forces with the edge of the sword before Barak. Then Sisera got out of his chariot and fled on foot.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so routed Y ^e howah Sisera and all of the chariots and all of the army to a mouth of a sword before faces of Barak and so Sisera got down from upon the chariot and he fled by his feet.
Septuagint	And the Lord displaced Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his army, with the edge of the sword before Barac: and Sisera descended from off his chariot, and fled on his feet.
Significant differences:	No significant differences; any apparent differences are simply a matter of translation from the original language into the English. The original Greek and Hebrew words are equivalent.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	And during the battle, the LORD confused Sisera, his chariot drivers, and his whole army. Everyone was so afraid of Barak and his army, that even Sisera jumped down from his chariot and tried to escape.
NLT	When Barak attacked, the LORD threw Sisera and all his charioteers and warriors into a panic. Then Sisera leaped down from his chariot and escaped on foot.
TEV	When Barak attacked with his army, the LORD threw Sisera into confusion together with all his chariots and men. Sisera got down from his chariot and fled on foot.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	The LORD threw Sisera, all his chariots, and his whole army into a panic in front of Barak's deadly assault. Sisera got down from his chariot and fled on foot.
HCSB	The LORD threw Sisera, all his charioteers, and all his army into confusion with the sword before Barak. Sisera left his chariot and fled on foot.

JPS (Tanakh) ...and the LORD threw Sisera and all his chariots and army into a panic before the onslaught of Barak [lit, “at the edge of the sword before Barak.”]. Sisera leaped from his chariot and fled on foot...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV 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.
 MKJV And Jehovah struck Sisera, and all the chariots, and all the army, with the edge of the sword in front of Barak, so that Sisera got down from the chariot and fled on his feet.
 WEB Yahweh confused 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 his feet.
 Young’s Updated LT And Jehovah destroys Sisera, and all the chariots, and all the camp, by the mouth of the sword, before Barak, and Sisera comes down from off the chariot, and flees on his feet.

What is the gist of this verse? God is victorious over Sisera and his chariots. Sisera escapes on foot.

Judges 4:15a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	<i>wâw</i> consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
It is typical in the Hebrew for each sentence—in fact, each thought—to begin with a <i>wâw</i> consecutive in the Hebrew. However, it is not necessary in an English translation to include a connective at every such juncture, as our language does not necessarily require that for successive thoughts or actions.			
châmam (חָמַם) [pronounced <i>chaw-MAHM</i>]	<i>to put to flight, to route; to put into a commotion; to make a noise, to move noisily, to confuse, to discomfit, to destroy utterly, to make extinct</i> (taking all of the meanings given by BDB and Gesenius)	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #2000 BDB #243
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong’s #3068 BDB #217
`êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong’s #853 BDB #84
Çîyç ^e râ` (אָרְוֵהוּ) [pronounced <i>sees^e-RAW</i>]	<i>battle array</i> [according to BDB]; and is transliterated <i>Sisera</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong’s #5516 BDB #696
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple <i>wâw</i> conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251

Judges 4:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all;</i> can also be rendered <i>any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
recheb (רֶכֶב) [pronounced <i>REH-khe^bv</i>]	<i>chariot, mill-stone, rider</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7393 BDB #939
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all;</i> can also be rendered <i>any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
machăneh (מַחֲנֶה) [pronounced <i>mah-khuh-NEH</i>]	<i>camp, encampment; an army camp; those who are camped [army, company, people]; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4264 BDB #334
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ʰ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
<p>The meanings of the lâmed preposition broken down into groups: ❶ <i>to, towards, unto</i>; it is used both to turn one's heart <i>toward</i> someone as well as to sin <i>against</i> someone; ❷ <i>to, even to</i>; in this sense, it can be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (<i>nearly</i>). ❸ Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς), meaning <i>into</i>, as in transforming <i>into</i> something else, changing <i>into</i> something else (Gen. 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing <i>becoming</i> another (Gen. 2:7). ❹ Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation <i>by</i>, which would be apropos here. ❺ <i>With regards to, as to</i>. Similar to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς) plus the dative. [Numbering from Gesenius]. ❻ <i>On account of, because, propter</i>, used of cause and reason (<i>propter</i> means <i>because</i>; Gesenius used it). ❼ <i>Concerning, about</i>, used of a person or thing made the object of discourse, after verbs of saying. ❽ <i>On behalf of</i> anyone, <i>for</i> anyone. ❾ As applied to a rule or standard, <i>according to, according as, as though, as if</i>. ❿ When associated with time, it refers to <i>the point of time at which</i> or <i>in which</i> anything is done; or it can refer to <i>the space of time during which</i> something is done (or occurs); <i>at the time of</i>.</p>			
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced <i>peh</i>]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6310 BDB #804

Judges 4:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
chereb (חֶרֶב) [pronounced <i>khe-RE^BV</i>]	<i>sword</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2719 BDB #352
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i>]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i> . When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i> . This can also mean <i>forwards; the front part</i> [or, the edge of a sword]. L ^o pânîym (לפְּנֵים) can take on a temporal sense as well: <i>before, of old, formerly, in the past, in past times</i> .			
Bârâq (בָּרָק) [pronounced <i>baw-RAWK</i>]	<i>lightening, lightening flash; transliterated Barak</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #1301 BDB #140

Translation: *Y^howah routed Sisera and all of the chariots and all of the army with [lit., by] the edge of the sword before Barak.* We will wait to examine the battle itself in more detail in Judges 5. However, you would think, in normal weather, if Sisera was making an escape, that he would stay in his chariot, get as far away as possible, and then get out near some woods. Here, Jehovah has routed Sisera and his chariots—although it says it was with the mouth (or, edge) of the sword, there are parts of Judges 5 which make us think that. The torrent of Kishon swept them away, the ancient torrent, the torrent Kishon. *O my soul, march on with strength* (Judges 5:21).

The first verb is the Qal imperfect of *to rout, to make a noise, to move noisily, to confuse, to discomfit, to put to flight, to put into a commotion, to destroy utterly, to make extinct*. This is the same word used of the panic experienced by the Egyptians at the Sea of Reeds (Ex. 14:24) and we will see that same word used of the Philistines at Mizpah during the days of Samuel (I Sam. 7:10).

Keil and Delitzsch discuss this verb: *As in Ex. 14:24 and Joshua 10:10, [this verb] denotes the confounding of the hostile army by a miracle of God, mostly by some miraculous phenomenon of nature (also see Ex. 14:24 2Sam. 22:15 Psalm 18:15 144:6).*⁴²

Every commentator has an opinion as to what happened in this battle:

⁴² Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Judges 4:15–16. I slightly edited the text.

Commentators on the Battle between Barak and Sisera

Commentator	Description
Arbinel	Frightened them, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, or disturbed them with a noise and tumult, as the word signifies; with a noise in the heavens, which were in their ears, as Abarbinel observes, like the noise of a large army, as was the case of the Syrians (2Kings 7:6); and they saw, he says, horses and chariots of fire, and the like, which terrified them; and all this he supposes was done before Barak descended from the mountain, so that he had nothing to do when he came but to pursue and kill, whereby it plainly appeared it was the Lord's doing. ⁴³
Barnes	What with the overflowing of the Kishon (Judges 5:21), by which numbers were drowned, and the panic which had seized the defeated army, and made them an easy prey to the sword of the pursuing Israelites, Sisera's whole force was cut to pieces and broken up. ⁴⁴
Clarke	The Lord Confounded: [He] threw them all into confusion, drove them pell-mell - caused chariots to break and overthrow chariots, and threw universal disorder into all their ranks. In this case Barak and his men had little to do but kill and pursue, and Sisera in order to escape, was obliged to abandon his chariot. There is no doubt all this was done by supernatural agency; God sent his angel and confounded them. ⁴⁵
Henry	God himself routs the enemy's army (Judges 4:15). Barak, in obedience to Deborah's orders, went down into the valley, though there upon the plain the iron chariots would have so much the more advantage against him, quitting his fastnesses upon the mountain in dependence upon the divine power; for in vain is salvation hoped for from hills and mountains; in the Lord alone is the salvation of his people, Jer. 3:23. And he was not deceived in his confidence: The Lord discomfited Sisera. It was not so much the bold and surprising alarm which Barak gave their camp that dispirited and dispersed them, but God's terror seized their spirits and put them into an unaccountable confusion. The stars, it seems, fought against them (Judges 5:20). Josephus says that a violent storm of hail which beat in their faces gave them this rout, disabled them, and drove them back; so that they became a very easy prey to the army of Israel, and Deborah's words were made good: " The Lord has delivered them into your hand; it is now in your power to do what you will with them. " ⁴⁶
Jamieson, Fausset and Brown	Broken and routed, the main body of Sisera's army fled northward; others were forced into the Kishon and drowned (see on Judges 5:21). ⁴⁷
Josephus	Josephus says there was a great tempest of rain and hail, and the wind blew the rain in their faces, which so blinded their eyes, that their slings and arrows were of no use to them; and they that bore armour were so benumbed, that they could not hold their swords. Something of this kind is intimated by Deborah in her song (Judges 5:20); and this was accompanied or followed by a slaughter. ⁴⁸

⁴³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:14.

⁴⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:16.

⁴⁵ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:15.

⁴⁶ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:10–16.

⁴⁷ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; from e-sword, Judges 4:16.

⁴⁸ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:15. Gill takes this from Josephus, *Antiquities*, I. 5. c. 5. sect. 1; sect. 4.

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The preposition which precedes *mouth* is the prefixed lâmed, which generally means *to, for, before*. Lâmed properly notes motion, or, at least direction, and a turning towards something. It has a myriad of meanings: one use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation *by*, which would be apropos here. No Strong's # BDB #510.

Judges 4:15b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAHD</i>]	<i>to descend, to go down</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
Çîyç ^e râ ^ʾ (אָרָסָה) [pronounced <i>sees^e-RAW</i>]	<i>battle array</i> [according to BDB]; and is transliterated <i>Sisera</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #5516 BDB #696
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
Together, they mean <i>from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to, from.</i>			
recheb (רֶכֶב) [pronounced <i>REH-khe^b</i>]	<i>chariot, mill-stone, rider</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7393 BDB #939

Translation: *Sisera then got down from [his] chariot...* You will note the lack of detail here. In most cases, if Sisera wanted to escape (probably a new experience for him), he would point his chariot away from the battle and go. His chariot is going to be faster than men on foot. However, obviously, there is something wrong with his chariot or with the conditions. What makes sense is, Sisera finds himself in a sudden mud field, and his chariots are useless. They are stopped up in the mud; the horses are unable to pull them, and the soldiers are more like sitting ducks than soldiers.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown instead suggest: *His chariot being probably distinguished by its superior size and elegance, would betray the rank of its rider, and he saw therefore that his only chance of escape was on foot.*⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; from e-sword, Judges 4:15.

Judges 4:15c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nûwç (נוּחַ) [pronounced noose]	to flee, to flee from, to escape, to depart, to hasten quickly [away]	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5127 BDB #630
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
regel (רַגַל) [pronounced REH-ge]	foot, feet	feminine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7272 BDB #919

Translation: ...and he fled on foot [lit., by his feet]. It is faster and more efficient for Sisera to escape on foot than it is for him to use his chariot.

Scofield suggests (along with several others): *A hint of what led to Sisera's defeat is given in 5:21–22. God sent heavy cloudbursts; the Kishon rose, overflowing the plain. Sisera's horses and chariots became mired in the mud, so he fled on foot.*⁵⁰

The army of Barak was thrown into confusion and put to flight by God, as God had promised long before: **“But Jehovah your God will deliver them before you and He will throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed.”** (Deut. 7:23). Israel's army began to destroy Sisera's forces so that he became afraid, jumped out of his chariot, and made a run for it. He could more easily run into a forested area and hide on foot than he could with a chariot. The intensity of the battle and the mud from the rainstorm must have made it impossible for him to unhitch his horse and ride off on his horse.

I want you to recognize what this implies: whereas Barak leads his men into battle, Sisera is apparently in a place where he can personally retreat, which suggests that he is bringing up the rear. If Sisera is leading this charge, it seems less likely that he could slip away unharmed, as he would be in the midst of the battle.

Gill writes: *[Sisera was] probably swift of foot; and besides thought it safest to quit his chariot, which in the confusion was in danger of being run against by others; as also he might judge he should not be so easily discerned who he was when on foot, as a common soldier, as in his splendid chariot; and this he might do in his fright, not considering his horses were swifter than he: thus Homer represents a Trojan warrior leaping out of his chariot to escape Diomedes, and another as doing the same to get clear of Achilles.*⁵¹

And Barak pursued after the chariot and after the army unto Harosheth-hagoiim. And so fell all an army of Sisera by a mouth of a sword, not remained even to one.

Judges
4:16

Barak continued to pursue after the chariots and after the army as far as Harosheth-hagoiim. And all of the army of Sisera fell by the mouth [or, edge] of the sword; not even one remained

⁵⁰ *The New Scofield Reference Bible*; Dr. C.I. Scofield; ©1967 New York-Oxford University Press; p. 293.

⁵¹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:15.

Barak continued to pursue the chariots and the army all the way to Harosheth-hagoiim. All of Sisera’s army fell to the edge of the sword; Barak did not take any prisoners.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And Barak pursued after the chariot and after the army unto Harosheth-hagoiim. And so fell all an army of Sisera by a mouth of a sword, not remained even to one.
Septuagint And Barac was pursuing after the chariots and after the army, into Arisoth of the Gentiles; and the whole army of Sisara fell by the edge of the sword, there was not one left.

Significant differences: In the Hebrew, *chariot* is in the singular; it is in the plural in the Greek, Latin and Syriac. I suspect that the understanding of the Hebrew, is that we are dealing more with the concept of *chariot* rather than indicating that there was but one chariot to pursue. Apart from that, there are no significant differences in the text.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV Barak’s forces went after Sisera’s chariots and army as far as Harosheth-Ha-Goiim. Sisera’s entire army was wiped out.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God’s Word™ Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth Haggoyim. So Sisera’s whole army was killed in combat. Not one man survived.
HCSB Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth of the Nations, and the whole army of Sisera fell by the sword; not a single man was left.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV 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.
WEB But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the army, to Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; there was not a man left.
Young’s Updated LT And Barak has pursued after the chariots and after the camp, unto Haroshes of the Goyim, and all the camp of Sisera falls by the mouth of the sword—there has not been left even one.

What is the gist of this verse? Some of the men in chariots are able to escape the battle, but Barak and his men continue to pursue them as far as Harosheth of the Gentiles; and every man is killed.

Judges 4:16a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (י) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251

Judges 4:16a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Bârâq (בָּרָק) [pronounced <i>baw-RAWK</i>]	<i>lightening, lightening flash; transliterated Barak</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #1301 BDB #140
râdaph (רָדַף) [pronounced <i>raw-DAHf</i>]	<i>to pursue, to follow after; to chase with hostile intent, to persecute</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7291 BDB #922
ʿachârêy (אַחֲרָי) [pronounced <i>ah-kuh-RAY</i>]	<i>hinder parts; behind, after; following; after that, afterwards</i>	preposition; plural form	Strong's #310 BDB #29
recheb (רֶכֶב) [pronounced <i>REH-khe^bv</i>]	<i>chariot, mill-stone, rider</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #7393 BDB #939
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿachârêy (אַחֲרָי) [pronounced <i>ah-kuh-RAY</i>]	<i>hinder parts; behind, after; following; after that, afterwards</i>	preposition; plural form	Strong's #310 BDB #29
machăneh (מַחֲנֶה) [pronounced <i>mah-khuh-NEH</i>]	<i>camp, encampment; an army camp; those who are camped [army, company, people]; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4264 BDB #334
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i>]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
Chărôsheth (חַרְשֶׁת) [pronounced <i>khuh-roh-SHETH</i>]	<i>woodland; magic drug, magic art; transliterated Harosheth</i>	proper singular noun/location	Strong's #2800 BDB #361
gôwyîm (גּוֹיִם) [pronounced <i>goh-YEEM</i>]	<i>Gentiles, [Gentile] nation, people, peoples, nations</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #1471 BDB #156

Translation: Barak continued to pursue after the chariots and after the army as far as Harosheth-hagoiim. When it says that Barak pursued after the chariot, this does not mean that he pursued after a particular chariot nor does this even necessarily refer to Barak in particular. Barak's army continued to chase down each and every chariot and they destroyed all of Sisera's army. The army of Sisera was probably quite adept at battle from a chariot against those who were earth bound and probably had a great deal of practice at that kind of maneuvering. However, because their chariots were stalled in the mud, they had lost out when it came to hand-to-hand combat on the ground. They were disoriented. Israel moved in on this having developed courage and momentum and they were quite successful. Sisera and his troops were pushed all the way back to where they first organized themselves, in Harosheth-hagoiim (or, Harosheth of the Gentiles).

There are a few unanswered questions—why does Sisera get out of his chariot and run; while the others apparently try to escape in their chariots? There are three possible, but different, explanations which come to mind: (1) Sisera is behind all of his troops, and closer to the Torrent Kishon, and therefore more susceptible to the overflowing

waters. The other chariot riders may have had enough traction to attempt to escape in their chariots. (2) Sisera's chariot was the most ostentatious chariot, and he left his chariot in the midst of the battle so that he would not be identified as Sisera and killed or tortured. (3) *Chariots* could be a metonym for those riding the chariots and perhaps they also tried to escape on foot.

In any case, Barak and his men are able to pursue these Canaanites; that is, their chariots cannot get away fast enough to escape.

Judges 4:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced naw-FAHL]	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply; to desert</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
machăneh (מַחֲנֵה) [pronounced mah-khuh-NEH]	<i>camp, encampment; an army camp; those who are camped [army, company, people]; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4264 BDB #334
Çîyçerâ' (צִיְצֵרָא) [pronounced sees'-RAW]	<i>battle array [according to BDB]; and is transliterated Sisera</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #5516 BDB #696
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

The meanings of the lâmed preposition broken down into groups: ❶ *to, towards, unto*; it is used both to turn one's heart *toward* someone as well as to sin *against* someone; ❷ *to, even to*; in this sense, it can be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (*nearly*). ❸ Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς), meaning *into*, as in transforming *into* something else, changing *into* something else (Gen. 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing *becoming* another (Gen. 2:7). ❹ Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation *by*, which would be apropos here. ❺ *With regards to, as to*. Similar to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς) plus the dative. [Numbering from Gesenius]. ❻ *On account of, because, propter*, used of cause and reason (*propter* means *because*; Gesenius used it). ❼ *Concerning, about*, used of a person or thing made the object of discourse, after verbs of saying. ❽ *On behalf of anyone, for anyone*. ❾ As applied to a rule or standard, *according to, according as, as though, as if*. ❿ When associated with time, it refers to *the point of time at which* or *in which* anything is done; or it can refer to *the space of time during which* something is done (or occurs); *at the time of*.

peh (פֶּה) [pronounced peh]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6310 BDB #804
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Judges 4:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
chereb (חֶרֶב) [pronounced <i>khe-RE^{BV}</i>]	<i>sword</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2719 BDB #352

Translation: *And all of the army of Sisera fell by the mouth [or, edge] of the sword;... Barak's men are able to catch up to the escaping chariots. My guess is, they got slowed down or stopped in mud as they attempted to escape. Some got further than others; but Barak and his men were able to kill virtually all of Sisera's army.*

Judges 4:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לֹא or לֹא־) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
shâ'ar (שָׂאָר) [pronounced <i>shaw-AHR</i>]	<i>to remain, to be left over</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #7604 BDB #983
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i>]	<i>while, so long as; to, even to [some certain limit]; even to [unto], unto; as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
ʿechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced <i>eh-KHAWD</i>]	<i>one, first, certain, only; but it can also mean a composite unity; possibly particular</i>	numeral adjective	Strong's #259 BDB #25

Translation: *...not even one remained.* This final phrase is rendered, variously, as *there hath not been left even one* (Young); *not even one was left* (NASB); and *there was not left so much as one* (Rotherham). The idiom, obviously, is that the Israelites did not allow even one man to live. What is meant is that they did not take any prisoners. Obviously, Sisera escaped and certainly it is possible that others escaped as well. However, when given the chance, Israel slaughtered all of Sisera's soldiers.

*Philo Byblius says, that nine hundred and ninety seven thousand of Sisera's army were slain.*⁵² This seems like an extraordinary number, so I have a hard time buying into it. Even so, recall God's promise to Israel: *"Five of you will pursue 100, and 100 of you will pursue 10,000; your enemies will fall before you by the sword"* (Lev. 26:8—see also Deut. 28:7 32:30; Joshua 23:10 Judges 7:19–21 1Sam. 14:6–16 17:45–52 1Chron. 11:11, 20 Psalm 81:14–15). So, even though the Bible does not give us a number here, and even though Sisera has only 900 chariots, this does not mean that we have an equal number of Canaanites. Various witnesses see different things; myself, I might be interested in the numbers here; someone else, as this author, gives the most sparing details of this battle.

One of the interesting things is that the Bible rarely tries to justify anything which occurs within it. Now, certainly during passages like these, I will go off on a tangent and remind as to how degenerate these people were; however, the Bible simply states that these people were slaughtered and adds very little detail as to the *why* beyond that. The

⁵² Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:16.

basic *why* was already answered at the beginning of this chapter—God told Deborah to tell Barak to get off his duff, organize the troops, and go defeat Sisera.

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Jael, the Wife of Heber, Kills Sisera

Judges 5:24–27

And Sisera fled by his feet unto a tent of Jael woman of Heber the Kenite for peace between Jabin, king of Hazor, and between a house of Heber the Kenite.

Judges
4:17

[Meanwhile] Sisera fled on foot [lit., *by his feet*] to the tent of Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite (for [there was] peace between Jabin, king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite).

Meanwhile, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there was peace between Jabin, the king of Hazor, and the house of Heber the Kenite.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And Sisera fled by his feet unto a tent of Jael woman of Heber the Kenite for peace between Jabin, king of Hazor, and between a house of Heber the Kenite.
Septuagint	And Sisera fled on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Chaber the Kenite, for [there was] peace between Jabin king of Asor and the house of Chaber the Kenite.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Only Sisera escaped. He ran to Heber's camp, because Heber and his family had a peace treaty with the king of Hazor. Sisera went to the tent that belonged to Jael, Heber's wife.
<i>The Message</i>	Meanwhile Sisera, running for his life, headed for the tent of Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite. Jabin king of Hazor and Heber the Kenite were on good terms with one another.
NLT	Meanwhile, Sisera ran to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because Heber's family was on friendly terms with King Jabin of Hazor.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word</i> TM	Meanwhile, Sisera fled on foot toward the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. Sisera did this because King Jabin of Hazor and Heber's family were on peaceful terms.
HCSB	Meanwhile, Sisera had fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there was peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the family of Heber the Kenite.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

LTHB	And Sisera fled on his feet to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. For <i>there</i> was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.
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Young's Updated LT

And Sisera fled on his feet unto the tent of Jael wife of Heber the Kenite, for peace is between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.

What is the gist of this verse? Barak and his army go north, following the army and chariots of Sisera; Sisera escapes on his own, finding himself at the tent of Jael, who is the wife of Heber the Kenite (and there is apparently a treaty between his house and the Canaanites).

Judges 4:17a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
It is typical in the Hebrew for each sentence—in fact, each thought—to begin with a wâw consecutive in the Hebrew. However, it is not necessary in an English translation to include a connective at every such juncture, as our language does not necessarily require that for successive thoughts or actions.			
Çîyç ^e râ ^ʾ (אָרָא) [pronounced sees ^e -RAW]	<i>battle array</i> [according to BDB]; and is transliterated <i>Sisera</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #5516 BDB #696
nûwç (נוּחַ) [pronounced noose]	<i>to flee, to flee from, to escape, to depart, to hasten quickly [away]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5127 BDB #630
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
regel (רֶגֶל) [pronounced REH-ge]	<i>foot, feet</i>	feminine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7272 BDB #919
ʿel (אֶל) [pronounced e]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʾohel (אֹהֶל) [pronounced OH-he]	<i>tent, tabernacle, house, temporary dwelling</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #168 BDB #13
Yâʿêl (יַעֲלֵ) [pronounced yaw-GALE]	transliterated <i>Jael</i>	feminine singular, proper noun	Strong's #3278 BDB #418
ʾîshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAWH]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #802 BDB #61
Cheber (חֶבֶר) [pronounced KHĒH ^B -ver]	<i>comrade; company, association; transliterated Heber, Cheber</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #2268 BDB #288
Qêynîy (קַיִנִּי) [pronounced kay-NEE]	<i>to acquire</i> and is transliterated <i>Kenite</i>	gentilic adjective with the definite article	Strong's #7017 BDB #884

The vowel point here is an a rather than a long ê.

Translation: [Meanwhile], Sisera fled on foot [lit., by his feet] to the tent of Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite... Barnes points out⁵³ that there were probably two tents—the wife’s and the husband’s tents, and that Sisera chose to go to the tent of the wife. This seems likely, as Abraham is said to go to the tent of Sarah in Gen. 18:6 (also see Gen. 24:67). She listens through the tent door to the conversation between Jesus Christ and Abraham in Gen. 18:10, which would make sense if she and Abraham had separate tents and Jesus Christ and Abraham were speaking to one another in his tent.

I believe that Sisera had in his mind an out; and that he did not want to run with his troops as they escaped. Sisera is apparently a very intelligent man, and when he saw that his army was completely and totally defeated, and that his troops were running en masse in one direction, he veered off in another direction. When coming upon the tents of Heber, which I don’t believe was accidental, Sisera chose the wife’s tent, thinking that she might be more sympathetic to his plight; or ask fewer questions. These are smart moves on Sisera’s part—but his intelligence won’t save him.

Application: Unbelievers can be intelligent and make intelligent decisions; but this will not save them.

Judges 4:17b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
shâlôwm (שָׁלוֹם) or shâlôm (שָׁלֵם) [pronounced <i>shaw-LOHM</i>]	<i>completeness, soundness, welfare, peace, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7965 BDB #1022
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>in the midst of, between, among; when found twice, it means between</i>	preposition	Strong's #996 BDB #107
Yâbîyn (יָבִין) [pronounced <i>yaw-BEEN</i>]	<i>intelligent; God [is] intelligent; whom God observes; transliterated Jabin</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #2985 BDB #108
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced <i>MEH-lek</i>]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4428 BDB #572
Châtsôr (חֲצֹר) [pronounced <i>khaw-SOHR</i>]	<i>enclosure, court, settled abode, settlement, village; transliterated Hazor</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #2674 BDB #347
Châtsôr comes from a Hebrew word meaning <i>enclosure, court, settled abode, settlement, village</i> ; therefore, we should expect to see this particular name in several places referring to several different cities, which is the way the find it; transliterated <i>Hazor</i>			
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>in the midst of, between, among; when found twice, it means between</i>	preposition	Strong's #996 BDB #107

⁵³ Barnes’ Notes, Volume 2, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 425.

Judges 4:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	house, household, habitation as well as inward	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
Cheber (חֶבֶר) [pronounced KHĒH ^B -ver]	comrade; company, association; transliterated Heber, Cheber	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #2268 BDB #288
Qêynîy (קֵינִי) [pronounced kay-NEE]	to acquire and is transliterated Kenite	gentilic adjective with the definite article	Strong's #7017 BDB #884

Translation: ...[\(for \[there was\] peace between Jabin, king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite\)](#). Obviously, Heber was relatively well-known and my guess is that there were not a lot of Kenites in that area. What would seem to be likely is that there was already a relationship between Sisera and Heber—not any sort of deep abiding friendship, but it is possible that Heber had a hand in the metal works which helped to build the chariots of Sisera. Another more likely possibility is that Heber paid some sort of tax to Jabin to insure his continued protection.

Let me suggest that Sisera, when not out at war, had the job of collecting tribute from these various peoples who are scattered throughout Jabin's general territory. Sisera knew many of these people by name; he knew enough about them to collect a reasonable tribute; and, in his mind, he had a good relationship with them. He felt safe in relationship to Jael; he did not feel threatened by her; he did not get any pro-Jewish vibe from her. This is all conjecture, but it paints a reasonable picture of the situation.

Heber was probably a neutral inhabitant of this land; sympathetic to the Jews, yet he more than likely paid some sort of tribute to Jabin (as did the Jews). Although Jael, his wife, clearly had preferences, she did not make these well-known. Her closer identification with the Jews was apparently not known to Sisera.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown comment on this: *According to the usages of nomadic people, the duty of receiving the stranger in the sheik's absence devolves on his wife, and the moment the stranger is admitted into his tent, his claim to be defended or concealed from his pursuers is established.*⁵⁴

Matthew Henry's opinion on this relationship: *And that which encouraged Sisera to go there was that at this time there was peace between his master and the house of Heber: not that there was any league offensive and defensive between them, only at present there were no indications of hostility. Jabin did them no harm, did not oppress them as he did the Israelites, their plain, quiet, harmless way of living making them not suspected nor feared, and perhaps God so ordering it as a recompence for their constant adherence to the true religion. Sisera thought he might therefore be safe among them; not considering that, though they themselves suffered not by Jabin's power, they heartily sympathized with the Israel of God that did.*⁵⁵

Wesley makes a similar observation about the peace between Jabin and Heber: *Not a covenant of friendship, which they were forbidden to make with that cursed people, but only a cessation of hostilities, which he afforded them because they were peaceable people, abhorring war, and wholly minding pasturage, and were not Israelites, with whom his principal quarrel was; and especially by God's over - ruling disposal of his heart to favour them who were careful to keep themselves uncorrupted with Israel's sins, and therefore preserved from their plagues.*⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; from e-sword, Judges 4:17.

⁵⁵ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:10–16.

⁵⁶ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Judges 4:17.

So you get a feel for these Kenites, let me offer what some commentators have said:

Commentators on the Kenites

Commentator	Opinion
Edersheim	There is something wild and weird about the appearance of these Kenites on the stage of Jewish history. Originally an Arab tribe, they retain to the last the fierceness of their race. Though more keenly Israelitish than any of the chosen race. In short, these stranger-converts are the most intense in their allegiance to the nation which they have joined, while at the same time, they never lose the characteristics of their own race. We mark all this, for example, in the appearance of Jehonadab, the sons of Rechab (2 Kings 10:15), and again much later during the troubles that befell Judah in the time of Jeremiah (Jer. 35). Jael,...the wife of Heber, was among the Kenites what Deborah...was in Israel, only with all the characteristics of her race developed to the utmost. At her tent-door she meets the fugitive Sisera. She disarms his suspicions; she invites him to rest and security; she even sacrifices the sacred rights of hospitality to her dark purpose. There is something terrible and yet grand about that fierce woman, to whom every other consideration is as nothing, so that she may avenge Israel and destroy its great enemy. ⁵⁷
Gill	These were not Israelites, nor did they make any claim to the country, and lived only in tents, and attended their flocks, and were a quiet people, and not at all disposed to war; and it might be so ordered by the providence of God, as a rebuke to the Israelites for their sins, when those who were only proselytes kept close to the worship of God, and so enjoyed liberty, peace, and prosperity. ⁵⁸

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And so came out Jael to meet Sisera and so she said unto him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside unto me. Do not fear." And so he turned aside unto her [into] the tent. And so she covered him in the heavy blanket.

Judges
4:18

Jael came out to meet Sisera and she said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me. Don't be afraid." So he turned aside to her [and went into] the tent. She then covered him with a heavy blanket.

Jael then came out of the tent and spoke with Sisera, saying, "Come into my tent, my lord, and rest here. Don't be afraid" So he went into the tent and she covered him with a heavy blanket.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

⁵⁷ Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 353.

⁵⁸ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:16.

Masoretic Text	And so came out Jael to meet Sisera and so she said unto him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside unto me. Do not fear." And so he turned aside unto her [into] the tent. And so she covered him in the heavy blanket.
Septuagint	And Jael went, out to meet Sisara, and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me, fear not." And he turned aside to her into the tent; and she covered him with a mantle.
Significant differences:	No significant differences. However, I am unsure about the final Greek word (δερρι).

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	She came out to greet him and said, "Come in, sir! Please come on in. Don't be afraid." After they had gone inside, Sisera lay down, and Jael covered him with a blanket.
NLT	Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Come into my tent, sir. Come in. Don't be afraid." So he went into her tent, and she covered him with a blanket.
TEV	Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Come in, sir; come into my tent. Don't be afraid." So he went in, and she hid him behind a curtain [or covered him with a rug].

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	When Jael came out of her tent, she met Sisera. She told him, "Sir, come in here! Come into my tent. Don't be afraid." So he went into her tent, and she hid him under a tent curtain.
HCSB	Jael went out to greet Sisera and said to him, "Come in, my lord. Come in with me. Don't be afraid." So he went into her tent, and she covered him with a rug.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV	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.
Young's Updated LT	And Jael goes out to meet Sisera, and says unto him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside unto me, fear not;" and he turns aside unto her, into the tent, and she covers him with a coverlet.

What is the gist of this verse? Jael goes out to meet Sisera and asks him to come her way and not to be afraid. He goes into her tent and she covers him up with a rug or blanket or something.

Judges 4:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
It is typical in the Hebrew for each sentence—in fact, each thought—to begin with a wâw consecutive in the Hebrew. However, it is not necessary in an English translation to include a connective at every such juncture, as our language does not necessarily require that for successive thoughts or actions.			

Judges 4:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâtsâ' (אָצַא') [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to go out, to come out, to come forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
Yâ'êl (אֵל) [pronounced yaw-GALE]	transliterated <i>Jael</i>	feminine singular, proper noun	Strong's #3278 BDB #418
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^o]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to encounter, to befall, to meet; to assemble [for the purpose of encountering God or exegeting His Word]; to come, to assemble</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7122 & #7125 BDB #896
This is a homonym; the other qârâ' means <i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to assemble</i> .			
Çîyç ^e râ' (אָרָא) [pronounced sees ^e -RAW]	<i>battle array</i> [according to BDB]; and is transliterated <i>Sisera</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #5516 BDB #696

Translation: [Jael came out to meet Sisera...](#) I am assuming that most of households in this general area are aware of the battle which is taking place, and they are possibly on alert for this reason. Jael apparently knows Sisera, and I have suggested that Sisera, when not fighting, collects tribute from individuals in order for them to be at peace with Jabin.

It's interesting that Sisera allows himself to be seen. Perhaps, once he got a safe distance away; once he could no longer hear the sounds of battle and the sounds of the chariot, that he would move onto the main roads, in order to cover more ground.

Judges 4:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'el (אֵל) [pronounced eternal life]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
çûwr (אָוַר) [pronounced soor]	<i>turn aside, depart, go away</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative; with the Voluntative hê	Strong's #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693

Judges 4:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
The hê at the end is called a voluntative hê and the verb itself is known as a cohortative and is often translated with the additional word <i>let, may, might, ought, should</i> .			
Now, this same word can be used to mean <i>depart, go away</i> ; so there must be something in the inflection of the voice which identifies which meaning is properly applied. Or, the meaning of this verb may depend upon the object, and whether they are there remaining or in the process of going past something. However, more likely, the key is the preposition which follows, whether <i>unto</i> or <i>from</i> is used.			
ʾādôwn (אָדוֹן) [pronounced aw-DOHN]	<i>lord, master, owner, superior, sovereign</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #113 BDB #10

Translation: ...and she said to him, "Turn aside, my lord,..." Jael addresses Sisera as *my lord*, which is a term of respect. Those of us with manners would address anyone in authority in this way, although we would probably use the more up-to-date term *sir*. Jael uses this term, not as one in bondage to Sisera, but as a term of respect toward one who commands a great army.

There are three or four possibilities: (1) Jael knew Sisera, and I have suggested insofar as she paid tribute and he collected it; (2) Jael knew of Sisera, and identified him on her own; (3) in the course of their conversation, Sisera made it known who he was (and possibly offered the most meager of information). (4) There is always the possibility that Jael had no idea who Sisera was and that he was essentially a stranger throughout most of this meeting (which makes little sense). I have listed these possibilities in the order of their likelihood, from most likely to not very bloody likely.

Whereas, I believe that Jael and Sisera are acquainted, this does not mean that Sisera had planned on going to this particular place. He walked through this general area, probably trying to formulate a plan, to determine what to do next. Jael suggests what his plan should be. He apparently was going to walk right by, and continue going as far from the battle site as possible; however, Jael asks him to *turn aside*. Now, this same word can be used to mean *depart, go away*; so there must be something in the inflection of the voice which identifies which meaning is properly applied. Or, the meaning of this verb may depend upon the object, and whether they are there remaining or in the process of going past something. I think the most likely explanation is the preposition associated with the verb. If Jael said *from me*, she is tell Sisera, *depart, go away*; however, she uses the prepositional phrase *unto me*, which indicates that he should come to her, to her tent. In any case, Sisera was not going to her tent in particular; he probably knew her and knew the area, but had intended to keep going.

Judges 4:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
çûwr (סוּר) [pronounced soor]	<i>turn aside, depart, go away</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative; with the Voluntative hê	Strong's #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693

Judges 4:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>The verb which we find over and over again is first the Qal imperative of שׁוּר (סור) [pronounced <i>soor</i>], which is one strange verb. Gesenius gives it two classifications of meanings, which are almost contradictory. ❶ The first set of meanings are <i>to turn aside, to go away, to depart</i>, particularly when followed by the preposition <i>mîn</i>. (a) It means <i>to turn away from, to depart from</i> when followed by <i>mîn</i>. (b) It means <i>to turn against</i> when followed by the <i>bêyth</i> preposition. (c) When followed by the accusative and the word <i>law</i>, it means <i>to violate the law</i>. (d) It can mean <i>to escape from, to withdraw from</i> calamity or darkness. (e) This can have an absolute sense, as in someone as <i>departed from God</i>; i.e., they have become degenerate. Finally, it can even be used in the sense of <i>having passed away, taken away</i> (I Sam. 15:32 I Kings 15:14 22:44 Hosea 4:18). ❷ This second set of meanings come under the heading of <i>to draw near</i>, particularly when followed by the preposition ׳al. It can be used <i>to turn aside into a house</i> (2Kings 4:8).</p>			
<p>The <i>hê</i> at the end is called a voluntative <i>hê</i> and the verb itself is known as a cohortative and is often translated with the additional word <i>let, may, might, ought, should</i>.</p>			
<p>׳el (אל) [pronounced <i>eternal life</i>]</p>	<p><i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i></p>	<p>directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 1st person singular suffix</p>	<p>Strong's #413 BDB #39</p>

Translation: ...turn aside to me. At this point, it is clear that she is asking Sisera to stop running and come toward her. When she adds the prepositional phrase *unto me*, it is clear that she is asking Sisera to stop his running.

Judges 4:18d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>לֹא (לא) [pronounced <i>low</i>]</p>	<p><i>not, no</i></p>	<p>negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation</p>	<p>Strong's #3808 BDB #518</p>
<p>יִרָא (ירא) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAY</i>]</p>	<p><i>to fear, to be afraid; to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect</i></p>	<p>2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect</p>	<p>Strong's #3372 BDB #431</p>

Translation: Don't be afraid." Sisera is going to be on heightened alert; and it is apparent that she is aware, to some extent, of his situation. That is, she may not know anything about the battle, but she knows that he is a soldier running from the battle; and, as I have suggested before, I believe that they are acquainted. So Jael, this woman, tells Sisera not to be afraid.

Sisera is a genius, as I have suggested before, so he quickly and carefully assesses the situation. They appear to be alone—or, at most, there are other women or children nearby. Whatever Sisera observes puts him at ease. Although Barak is after Sisera, it is not clear that Sisera knows this. Sisera is taking a calculated risk, but a reasonable one. Barak would not suspect him of being in the tent of a married woman, as that violates the cultural norms of that day. Barak might not even expect Sisera to stop, despite his exhaustion. Adrenalin gives us an incredible boost. There is nothing in Jael's demeanor to suggest that she is planning anything untoward to Sisera. As a soldier, Sisera is constantly evaluating situations and determining the odds. At this point, this choice seems to be a safe one in his estimation.

Judges 4:18e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
çûwr (וָרַח) [pronounced soor]	<i>to turn aside, to depart, to go away</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693
ʿel (לְ) [pronounced eternal life]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʿohel (לְ אֹהֶל) [pronounced OH-heh]	<i>tent, tabernacle, house, temporary dwelling</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article and the directional hê	Strong's #168 BDB #13

Translation: So he turned aside to her [and went into] the tent. Sisera is very likely exhausted and hungry. He is running to escape. Prior to the battle, he has been pumped with adrenalin and probably slept very little (he had to gather his soldiers to meet Barak as well, so his responsibilities would have kept him up). And after some time fighting, Sisera is running on fumes. He believes that his relationship with Heber and Jael to be good, and, besides, Jael is just a woman. So, Sisera believes that he is reasonably safe. He is being urged into her tent, and this seems like a fortunate turn of events to him.

Commentators offer up two divergent opinions at this point: (1) with her husband gone, it is culturally imperative for Jael to welcome a stranger into her abode and to offer him protection and sustenance;⁵⁹ (2) a male was not to be taken into the tent of a woman, much less a married woman.⁶⁰ The latter seems to be the more likely to me.

Judges 4:18f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
kâçâh (וָרַח) [pronounced kaw-SAWH]	<i>to cover, to clothe, to conceal; to spread over, to engulf; to overwhelm</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Piel imperfect; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3680 BDB #491
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

⁵⁹ See Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; from e-sword, Judges 4:17–18.

⁶⁰ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:18. *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 332.

Judges 4:18f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
semîykâh (שִׁמְיָכָה) [pronounced <i>sehm-ee-KAW</i>]	<i>a rug, a thick coverlet, a blanket, a quilt</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #8063 BDB #970

Translation: *She then covered him with a heavy blanket.* The last verb is the Piel imperfect of *to cover, to clothe, to spread over, to overwhelm*. What she covers him with is first preceded by the *bêyth* preposition and then followed by a feminine noun found only here, and supposed to mean *a rug, a thick coverlet, a blanket, a quilt*. It has the same root as the word for a large *over garment* (which is Strong's #8071 BDB #971). I would think that *thick blanket* is probably the best rendering.

Gill: *The word for a mantle, according to Kimchi, signifies such a garment which has locks of wool on both sides of it, a sort of rug, and so very fit to cover with, and keep warm. So David de Pomis describes it, as having locks and threads hanging down here and there.*⁶¹

Sisera is not being covered by a blanket to hide him, as his head will be sticking out (as we will see). Therefore, we may reasonably assume that this is winter and he is cold. In the summer, it is possible that Sisera would have bypassed Jael's offer, since he could easily sleep outside while on the run. However, the elements have conspired in all ways against Sisera. The rain storm partially immobilized his troops; and the cold causes him to take Jael up on her offer, and to go inside her tent. This also suggests that we are at a higher elevation as well.

I don't think that Sisera stumbled upon this tent entirely by accident nor did he go to it not knowing where he was. He certainly ran in a panic and either, part way in his panic, or when he suddenly looked around and saw familiar surroundings, realized where he was, and that he was at the tent of a quasi-ally. Heber and Jael might have been his allies through the work which Heber did and because Sisera and Jabin ruled over this chunk of land. This gave Sisera enough confidence to enter into this tent in his desperate flight. He has some reticence, particularly after coming out of the panic stricken state that he was in, so Jael helps to calm him. You can see her speaking quietly and soothingly as one would with a skittish pet dog. *Since ancient Near Eastern custom prohibited any man other than a woman's husband or father from entering her tent, Jael seemed to offer Sisera an ideal hiding place.*⁶² We get the short version in this verse—he walks in and Jael covers him with a thick blanket, to give him warmth to rest.

We may speculate as to what was going through Sisera's mind. Certainly Heber and Jael knew who he was (there does not appear to be any sort of introduction or acquaintance; furthermore, she is not going to invite a complete stranger to hide in her tent). Sisera was in a panic, at some point in time, realized where he was, and then went to the tent of Jael, not certain exactly what he would expect. My thinking is that he may have gone into this lightly populated area in search of a drink. He was obviously far enough away from Barak to where he was completely out of Barak's sight and was at least mile or more ahead of Barak. In his weakened condition, Sisera certainly did not want to face a man, and there is no telling whether Heber would have seized the moment to be opportunistic. Being offered the chance to rest was a Godsend to him. Prior to a battle, like any man, he probably got no rest. During the battle, he ran on pure adrenalin; and now, in escaping from the battle and from Barak, he had probably hit the limit of his endurance. That Jael would have called to him is fortuitous as Sisera feels safer in the company of a woman.

⁶¹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:18. He quotes David de Pomis, *Tzemaeh David*, fol. 216. 3.

⁶² *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 332.

And so he said unto her, "Cause me to drink, please, a little of waters for I am thirsty." And so she opened a skin container of the milk and so she caused him to drink and so she covered him.

Judges
4:19

He said to her, "Cause me to drink a little water, please, for I am thirsty." So she opened a skin container of milk and caused him to drink; and then she covered him.

Then he said to her, "Give me a little water to drink, if you would, for I am quite thirsty." So Jael opened up a skin container of milk and gave him some milk to drink. Then she covered him.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so he said unto her, "Cause me to drink, please, a little of waters for I am thirsty." And so she opened a skin container of the milk and so she caused him to drink and so she covered him.

Septuagint And he said to her, "Give me, I pray you, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty: and she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him to drink, and covered him.

Significant differences: In the Hebrew, *water* is in the plural, which is typical for its usage there. No other significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV "Could I have a little water?" he asked. "I'm thirsty." Jael opened a leather bottle and poured him some milk, then she covered him back up.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ Sisera said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink. I'm thirsty." But instead she gave him milk to drink and covered him up again.

HCSB He said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink for I am thirsty." She opened a container of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him *again*.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV 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.

Young's Updated LT And he says unto her, "Give me to drink, I pray you, a little water, for I am thirsty;" and she opens the bottle of milk, and gives him to drink, and covers him.

What is the gist of this verse? Sisera asks for some water, and Jael offers him milk, and then covers him up.

Judges 4:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Judges 4:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced eternal life]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
shâqâh (שָׁקַח) [pronounced shaw-KAW]	<i>to give drink to, to furnish drink, to cause to drink; to water [cattle, land]; to irrigate [land]</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Hiphil imperfect; with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #8248 BDB #1052
nâ' (נָא) [pronounced naw]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	particle of entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
m ^e aṭ (מְאֹט) [pronounced m ^e -GAHT]	<i>a little, fewness, few</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4592 BDB #589
BDB lists this as a substantive; Owen as an adverb.			
mayim (מַיִם) [pronounced MAH-yim]	<i>water, waters</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #4325 BDB #565

Translation: Then he said to her, “Cause me to drink a little water, please,... You will note that Sisera behaves like a guest. He does not demand anything; he asks, with great politeness, for a drink of water.

Judges 4:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
tzâmê' (צָמֵא) [pronounced tzaw-MAY]	<i>to thirst, to be thirsty; [metaphorically] to desire, to strongly desire, to desire eagerly</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6770 BDB #854

Translation: ...for I am thirsty.” Sisera explains why he wants a drink—he is thirsty. He probably has had nothing to drink for at least 12 hours; possibly even longer.

You will note that we have greater detail in this meeting between Sisera and Jael than the battle between Barak and Sisera. This is all a part of what Deborah the prophetess had warned: that Barak's glory would be usurped by a woman. Even in Scripture, there is a more detailed historical account of Jael and Sisera than of the battle.

This detail also suggests that Jael recorded this history. Jael is the historian for all or most of this chapter; and Deborah for the chapter which follows. God has designed for men to be in positions of authority; however, there are times when the best man for the job is a woman.

You know, it is fascinating just how often the Bible makes mention of a person who is thirsty and desires to drink.

Thirst in Scripture	
Scripture	Incident
Gen. 24:43–44	The servant who is looking for a wife for Isaac: "I am standing here at a spring. Let the virgin who comes out to draw water, and I say to her: Please let me drink a little water from your jug, and who responds to me, 'Drink, and I'll draw water for your camels also'--let her be the woman the LORD has appointed for my master's son."
Judges 5:25	Deborah offering milk to a thirsty Sisera: He asked for water; she gave him milk. She brought him curdled milk in a majestic bowl.
1Kings 17:10	Elijah, after the wadi had dried up: So Elijah got up and went to Zarephath. When he arrived at the city gate, there was a widow woman gathering wood. Elijah called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup and let me drink."
Isa. 41:17–19	God speaking of the desert-area which Israel had become, and how He would restore the land: "The poor and the needy seek water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. I, the LORD, will answer them; I, the God of Israel, do not forsake them. I will open rivers on the barren heights, and springs in the middle of the plains. I will turn the desert into a pool of water and dry land into springs of water. I will plant cedars in the desert, acacias, myrtles, and olive trees. I will put cypress trees in the desert, elms and box trees together."
John 4:7–14	<p>Jesus uses <i>thirst</i> as an analogy for salvation: A woman of Samaria came to draw water. "Give Me a drink," Jesus said to her, for His disciples had gone into town to buy food.</p> <p>"How is it that You, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" she asked Him. For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.</p> <p>Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would ask Him, and He would give you living water."</p> <p>"Sir," said the woman, "You don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep. So where do you get this 'living water'? You aren't greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and livestock."</p> <p>Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again--ever! In fact, the water I will give him will become a well of water springing up within him for eternal life."</p>

The key is, everyone gets thirsty and everyone has the ability to drink. Salvation is that easy to us; salvation requires that we do nothing more than drink the water which has been offered to us.

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Judges 4:19c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
pâthach (פָּתַח) [pronounced paw-THAHKH]	<i>to open, to open up; to let loose [as in, to draw (a sword)]; to begin, to lead in</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6605 BDB #834
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
nô'd (נֹד) [pronounced nohd]	<i>a skin container, a wineskin generally made from the skin of a goat</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4997 BDB #609
châlâb (חָלָב) [pronounced khaw-LAW ^{BV}]	<i>milk; cheese</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2461 BDB #316

Translation: [So she opened a skin container of milk...](#) Although Sisera asks for water, Jael offers him something more substantive—although this is probably milk, it could be a yogurt type product. Since it is in a skin container, I would not be cheese, obviously.

In case you wonder, why she offers him milk, whereas he asked for water—the milk is going to help to relax Sisera; he is going to fall asleep easier. This is no reason to assume, as Josephus does, that the milk is corrupt, spoiled or drugged.⁶³ I believe that Jael is depending upon that natural function of warm milk, to relax Sisera and make it easier for him to rest. Some⁶⁴ even suggest that this is a milk liquor, which is possible.

Interestingly enough, Deborah mentions this as well in her song (Judges 5:25); and, apparently, this milk product is put into a bowl, suggesting that it is more of a yogurt consistency. From our milk, we derive sour cream, yogurt, cottage cheese, butter and cheese; it is not out of the question to think that the Israelites were also able to produce similar products; nor is it out of the question that they produced a food different from what we are used to. However, we must be careful not to make assumptions as to the exact nature of this milk product, as there is simply no way of knowing precisely what it is.

Judges 4:19d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

⁶³ Josephus, *Antiquities*, I. 5. c. 5. sect. 1. Gill mentions this in Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:19.

⁶⁴ E.g., Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:17–24.

Judges 4:19d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâqâh (שָׁקַח) [pronounced shaw-KAW]	<i>to give drink to, to furnish drink, to cause to drink; to water [cattle, land]; to irrigate [land]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Hiphil imperfect; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8248 BDB #1052

Translation: ...and caused him to drink;... The use of the Hiphil here suggests that Jael held the skin container up to his mouth and caused Sisera to drink or simply that she gave him a drink.

That Jael offers Sisera more than he asks for increases his confidence and security. He lets down his guard even more. There is nothing in her demeanor which suggests any menace.

Judges 4:19e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
kâçâh (כָּסָה) [pronounced kaw-SAWH]	<i>to cover, to clothe, to conceal; to spread over, to engulf; to overwhelm</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Piel imperfect; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3680 BDB #491

Translation: ...and then she covered him. So far, everything seems to be copacetic. Sisera is on the run; he comes by the tent of a neutral inhabitant of the land, a Kenite, and she convinces him to hide in her tent. He requests something to drink, and she has milk, probably warm goat's milk from the family goat (most families kept a goat around that would give up to six pints of milk a day; see Prov. 27:27). She then covers him with the blanket.

And so he said unto her, "Stand [at] an opening of the tent and he is if a man comes and he asks you and he says, 'Is there here a man?' And say, 'No.' "

Judges
4:20

He said to her, "Stand [at] the opening of the tent and it will be if a man comes and asks you, 'Is there here a man?'; you will say, 'No.' "

Then he said to her, "Stand at the tent door so that if anyone asks you, 'Is there a man in here?', you will say there isn't.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so he said unto her, "Stand [at] an opening of the tent and he is if a man comes and he asks you and he says, 'Is there here a man?' And say, 'No.' "

Septuagint

And he said to her, "Stand now by the door of the tent, and it shall come to pass if any man come to you, and ask of you, and say, 'Is there any man here?' Then you will say, There is not."

Significant differences: Although we end in the Greek with a full sentence, such is implied in the Hebrew.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV "Stand at the entrance to the tent," Sisera told her. "If someone comes by and asks if anyone is inside, tell them 'No.' "

The Message He then said, "Stand at the tent flap. If anyone comes by and asks you, 'Is there anyone here?' tell him, 'No, not a soul.' "

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ He said to her, "Stand at the door of the tent. If anyone comes and asks if there has been a man around here, tell them no."

HCSB Then he said to her, "Stand at the entrance to the tent. If a man comes and asks you, 'Is there a man here?' say, 'No.'"

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV 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.'"

LTHB And he said to her, Stand at the door of the tent, and it shall be if anyone comes in and asks you, and says, Is there a man here? Then you shall say, There is not.

Young's Updated LT And he says unto her, "Stand at the opening of the tent, and it has been, if any does come in, and has asked you, and said, Is there a man here? that you have said, There is not."

What is the gist of this verse? Sisera, knowing that he is about to fall asleep, gives Jael instructions: she is to stand at the tent door and if she is asked whether a man is with her, she is to respond, "No."

Judges 4:20a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
It is typical in the Hebrew for each sentence—in fact, each thought—to begin with a wâw consecutive in the Hebrew. However, it is not necessary in an English translation to include a connective at every such juncture, as our language does not necessarily require that for successive thoughts or actions.			
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced eternal life]	unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʾamad (אָמַד) [pronounced gaw-MAHD]	to take a stand, to stand, to remain, to endure, to withstand	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #5975 BDB #763

Judges 4:20a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
I have no clue why this is a masculine singular; but I have confirmed that with the Hebrew text.			
pethach (פֶּתַח) [pronounced PEH-thakhk]	<i>opening, doorway, entrance, gate</i> [for a tent, house, or city]; metaphorically, <i>gate [of hope, of the mouth]</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6607 BDB #835
ʾohel (אֹהֶל) [pronounced OH-heh]	<i>tent, tabernacle, house, temporary dwelling</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #168 BDB #13

Translation: He said to her, “Stand [at] the opening of the tent... What is being said is fairly simple. How it is said is a bit more complex. Following the Qal imperative⁶⁵ *stand*, we have the masculine singular construct *opening, doorway, entrance*. After that, the word for *tent*.

I must admit to being clueless as to why we have a *masculine* singular imperative here. The difference between the 3rd person, masculine singular perfect tense and the 2nd person, masculine singular imperative is the pronunciation; which means the vowel points (added hundreds of years later). However, the difference between the 2nd person masculine singular and the 2nd person feminine singular is a yodh on the end; we would expect to find the yodh on the end of the word, but we do not. The only explanation which comes to mind is, Sisera spoke very poor Hebrew, and this is preserved in the text.

In any case, Sisera orders Jael to stand in the doorway of the tent; or in front of the opening of the tent.

Judges 4:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
bôwʾ (בָּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97

⁶⁵ Keil and Delitzsch give this point no little discussion on pp. 221–222 in Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II..

Translation: ...and it will be if a man comes... Literally, what he says is: “Stand an opening of the tent and it will be if a man comes...” Essentially, Sisera wants Jael to stand guard at the opening of the tent. If anyone comes by (particularly, Barak), Sisera wants Jael to lie about his presence. He is far enough ahead of Barak to have had this short conversation with Jael without panicking; however, he is concerned that some of the Jewish army are still pursuing him (it will turn out that Barak, apparently, is pursuing him).

Judges 4:20c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251
shâ`al (שאל) [pronounced shaw-AHL]	<i>to ask [petition, request, inquire]; to demand; to question, to interrogate; to ask [for a loan]; to consult; to salute</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect; with the 2 nd person feminine singular suffix	Strong’s #7592 BDB #981
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251
`amar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55
This phrase <i>and he has said</i> is normal for the Hebrew, but superfluous in the English.			
hă (ה) [pronounced heh]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied.		Strong’s #none BDB #209
yêsh (יש) [pronounced yaysh]	<i>being, substance, existence; used as a substitute for to be (without reference to number or tense); to be present, to be ready, to exist</i>	substantive; the verb <i>to be</i> may be implied	Strong’s #3426 BDB #441
pôh (פה) [pronounced poe]	<i>here</i>	adverb	Strong’s #6311 BDB #805
This particular adverb is found surprisingly few times in Scripture (less than a half dozen times, and mostly in conjunction with another prefix).			
`iysh (יש) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong’s #376 BDB #35

Translation: ...and asks you, ‘Is there here a man?’;... Now most of the time, in the Hebrew, after the phrase *he asks you*, we would have the Qal infinitive *to say*. My thinking that in the speaking which goes on between these two, Sisera is attempting to speak the language of the Kenite, and it is therefore somewhat garbled. This is consistent with Sisera using the 2nd person masculine singular imperative before, where we would have expected a feminine singular.

As far as I know, only Keil and Delitzsch address this concern: *The anomaly apparent in the use of the gender may be accounted for on the ground that the masculine was the more general form, and might therefore be used for the more definite feminine.*⁶⁶

Sisera would have fallen asleep quickly from pure exhaustion, feeling absolutely safe. No one would think to look for him in the tent of another man's wife. That was something which was just not done. His last conscious thoughts were about how brilliant and lucky he was.

Judges 4:20d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾamar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾeyn (אין) [pronounced ān]	<i>nothing, not, [is] not; not present, not ready; expresses non-existence, absence or non-possession; there is no [none, no one, not]</i>	particle of negation; substantive of negation	Strong's #369 BDB #34

Translation: ...you will say, 'No.' " When anyone inquires about his presence, Jael is to say *no*.

One commentator got so weird is to suggest that Jael was fine with everything until Sisera here asks her to lie, and for that reason, she turned against him.⁶⁷ I think that approach is patently absurd. As I have suggested before, I think that Sisera and Jael are acquainted, as tribute collector and tribute payer. Although Heber and Jael took a neutral position when meeting with Sisera (or, even a pro-Canaanite position), it will become apparent that Jael is not neutral. As has been pointed out before, the Kenites and Israelites have a long history together as allies; and Jael will continue in this tradition.

We have at least two other similar incidents in Israel's history: In Joshua 2:3–5, Rahab the Prostitute hid the Israelite spies from the king of Jericho; and in 2Sam. 17:17–20, a woman hid two of David's men from Absalom's servants.

⁶⁶ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Judges 4:20–21.

⁶⁷ Matthew Henry seems to suggest this in Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:17–24. He writes *Was he weary? She finds him a very convenient place to repose himself in, and recruit his strength. Was he thirsty? Well he might. Did he want a little water to cool his tongue? The best liquor her tent afforded was at his service, and that was milk (Judges 4:19), which, we may suppose, he drank heartily of, and, being refreshed with it, was the better disposed to sleep. Was he cold, or afraid of catching cold? or did he desire to be hid from the pursuers, if they should search that tent? She covered him with a mantle (Judges 4:18). All expressions of care for his safety. Only when he desired her to tell a lie for him, and to say he was not there, she declined making any such promise (Judges 4:20). We must not sin against God, no, not to oblige those we would show ourselves most observant of.*

And so took Jael, woman [or wife] of Heber, a tent spike and so she took the hammer in her hand and so she went unto him in the surreptitiousness and so she drove the tent spike into his temple and so she [the tent spike] went down into the earth and he was sleeping and so he was fluttering and so he died.

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[Later on] Jael, the wife of Heber, took a tent spike and she took a hammer in her hand and went to him surreptitiously. She then drove the tent spike into his temple and it went down into the earth. He was sleeping and he was in a deep sleep and then he died.

After Sisera fell asleep, Jael, Heber's wife, then took a tent spike and a hammer and quietly approached him. Then she drove the tent spike into his temple all the way through. Sisera had been in a deep sleep and then died.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so took Jael, woman [or wife] of Heber, a tent spike and so she took the hammer in her hand and so she went unto him in the surreptitiousness and so she drove the tent spike into his temple and so she [the tent spike] went down into the earth and he was sleeping and so he was fluttering and so he died.

Septuagint And Jael the wife of Chaber took the pin of the tent, and took a hammer in her hand, and went secretly to him, and fastened the pin in his temple, and it went through to the earth, and he fainted away, and he was darkened [Hebrew: *darkness fell upon him*] and he died.

Significant differences: No significant differences apart from the translations. The Greek and Hebrew behind the English translations are essentially equivalent.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV Sisera was exhausted and soon fell fast asleep. Jael took a hammer and drove a tent-peg through his head into the ground, and he died.

The Message Then while he was fast asleep from exhaustion, Jael wife of Heber took a tent peg and hammer, tiptoed toward him, and drove the tent peg through his temple and all the way into the ground. He convulsed and died.

NLT But when Sisera fell asleep from exhaustion, Jael quietly crept up to him with a hammer and tent peg. Then she drove the tent peg through his temple and into the ground, and so he died.

TEV Sisera was so tired that he fell sound asleep. Then Jael took a hammer and a tent peg, quietly went up to him, and killed him by driving the peg right through the side of his head and into the ground.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word[™] When Sisera had fallen sound asleep from exhaustion, Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and walked quietly toward him with a hammer in her hand. She hammered the tent peg through his temples into the ground. So Sisera died.

HCSB While he was sleeping from exhaustion, Heber's wife Jael took a tent peg, grabbed a hammer, and went silently to Sisera. She hammered the peg into his temple and drove it into the ground, and he died.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV	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.
MKJV	Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a peg of the tent and put a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him, and struck the peg into his temple, and beat it into the ground. For he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.
WEB	Then Jael Heber's wife took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him, and struck the pin into his temples, and it pierced through into the ground; for he was in a deep sleep; so he swooned and died.
Young's Updated LT	And Jael wife of Heber takes the pin of the tent, and takes the hammer in her hand, and goes unto him gently, and strikes the pin into his temples, and it fastens in the earth—and he has been fast asleep, and is weary—and he dies.

What is the gist of this verse? After Sisera falls into a deep sleep, Jael will take a tent pin and a hammer and slam the tent pin through Sisera's temple, killing him.

Judges 4:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
It is typical in the Hebrew for each sentence—in fact, each thought—to begin with a wâw consecutive in the Hebrew. However, it is not necessary in an English translation to include a connective at every such juncture, as our language does not necessarily require that for successive thoughts or actions.			
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
Yâ'êl (יַעֲלֵ) [pronounced <i>yaw-GALE</i>]	transliterated <i>Jael</i>	feminine singular, proper noun	Strong's #3278 BDB #418
ʾîshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAWH</i>]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #802 BDB #61
Cheber (חֶבֶר) [pronounced <i>KĒH^B-ver</i>]	<i>comrade; company, association; transliterated Heber, Cheber</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #2268 BDB #288
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
yâthêd (יָתֵד) [pronounced <i>yaw-THADE</i>]	<i>pin, stake, nail, peg</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3489 BDB #450
ʾohel (אֹהֶל) [pronounced <i>OH-heh</i>]	<i>tent, tabernacle, house, temporary dwelling</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #168 BDB #13

Translation: [Later on] Jael, the wife of Heber, took a tent spike... As you can see, this verse is filled with wâw consecutives, which is often the case when we deal with continuous action. Although some translations go with the translation *tent peg*, I think that *tent pin* more accurately renders the original Hebrew word.

These tent pins or spikes are going to be driven deep into the ground in order to stabilize a tent; and it must be sharp, as often it will be forced into hard ground.

Judges 4:21b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
sîym (שׂיַם) [pronounced <i>seem</i>]; also spelled sûwm (שׂוּמ) [pronounced <i>soom</i>]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
maqâbâh (מַקְבֵּה) [pronounced <i>mahk-kaw^b-VAW</i>]	<i>hammer</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4717 BDB #666
The Hebrew word which is actually found here is...			
maqebeth (מַקְבֵּת) [pronounced <i>mahk-KEH^b-veth</i>]	<i>a stone quarry; a hole, excavation</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4718 BDB #666
The two possible explanations are: (1) Strong's #4717 is what we should find here; and that the confounding of one Hebrew letter (ת for ה) first occurred; and then the vowel points were inserted later; or (2) Strong's #4718 has two sets of meanings (as presented in Gesenius p. 502); and that it means the same as Strong's #4717. Given that the words are so similar, a confounding of them makes perfect sense.			
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun, with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

Translation: ...and she took a hammer in her hand... Pretty much every household is going to have tent spikes and hammers. That would be standard issue for any family that lives in a tent. I would also think that Jael is adept at using these tools as well.

Judges 4:21c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Judges 4:21c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bôw' (בּוֹ) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (לְ) [pronounced eternal life]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
lâ'ṭ (לֹאֲ) [pronounced lawf] (also spelled without the aleph)	<i>surreptitiousness, quietness, secrecy; surreptitiously; privately</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3814 & #3909 BDB #532

Lâ'ṭ comes from the verb *to muffle, to cover* (Strong's #3813); or is the participle of *to wrap* (Strong's #3874). The former understanding obviously makes the most sense.

Translation: ...and went to him surreptitiously. When describing how she goes to him, we have a prepositional phrase. It is the bêyth preposition, the definite article and the masculine singular noun lâ'ṭ (לֹאֲ) [pronounced lawf], which means *surreptitiousness, quietness, secrecy*. Although this is not an adverb, *surreptitiously* is probably the most accurate rendering. In the other few places where this noun occurs, there is no aleph (א).

Sisera is fast asleep in the tent. Jael gets the spike and hammer and goes into the tent quietly, so as not to wake him.

Judges 4:21d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
tâqa' (טָקְאָ) [pronounced taw-KAHG]	<i>to fasten, to thrust, to clap, to give a blow, to give a blast</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #8628 BDB #1075
The key to the meaning of this verb is context and the direct object.			
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
yâthêd (אֶת־) [pronounced yaw-THADE]	<i>pin, stake, nail, peg</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3489 BDB #450

Judges 4:21d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
raqqâh (רַקְּהָ) [pronounced rahk-KAW]	<i>temple, side of head</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7541 BDB #956

Translation: *She then drove the tent spike into his temple...* Jael had probably set up a tent many times in the past. She was well-able to use a spike and a hammer in this regard.

In certain ground, a spike holds better if struck fewer times. Certain kinds of building materials here function better if a hammer is not used, but an air-powered hammer, in order to drive a nail in with one blow. Jael would be adept at this. She would have set up the spike and hammered with extreme force; she has but one chance to do this right, and Jael is apparently up for this.

Judges 4:21e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
tsânach (נִצַּח) [pronounced tsaw-NAHKH]	<i>to descend, to let oneself down, to go down [into]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6795 BDB #856
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, ground, soil</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #776 BDB #75

Translation: *...and it went down into the earth.* Sisera is asleep on his side; Jael positions the spike at his temple and strikes it hard; if need be, she strikes it a second time. The spike *descends, goes down* (to the ground).

Judges 4:21f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hûw' (הוּ) [pronounced hoo]	<i>he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

Judges 4:21f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
râgam (רָגַם) [pronounced raw-DAHM]	<i>to be in a heavy sleep, to fall into a heavy sleep; to be unconscious</i>	Niphal participle	Strong's #7290 BDB #922

Translation: *He was sleeping...* The situation is that Sisera had been doing battle, he escaped on foot, he had been running for miles, and he was totally exhausted. In battle, of course, his adrenaline was racing through his system, but he is in a quiet tent with a neutral party, he has been given some warm milk, and she appears as though she will follow his orders. The exhaustion has suddenly hit him and he sleeps deeply. When he falls into the deep sleep, Jael surreptitiously moves closer to him and drives the tent pin through his temple. Historically, the Jews and the Kenites had been allies. Heber, her husband, and she, either from necessity or for opportunity, were allied with the Canaanites. This action allowed her to renew the longtime alliance that their ancestors had.

The NIV Study Bible writes: *Armed only with domestic implements, this dauntless woman destroyed the great warrior whom Barak had earlier feared.*⁶⁸

Judges 4:21g

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿûph (עָוַף) [pronounced gôopf]	<i>to flutter; it is translated both to fly (Job 5:7 Isa. 11:14) and to be in a deep sleep; to be weary (Judges 4:21 1Sam. 14:25)</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5774 BDB #733

I believe that these seemingly disparate meanings may be explained as follows: the verb here actually means *to flutter*; so, when speaking of the wings of a bird, the wings *flutter* and the bird *flies*. However, when speaking of a person, their eyes *flutter* when in the REM stage of sleep (rapid eye movement; and the person sleeping is dreaming).

Translation: *...and he was in a deep sleep...* After Sisera is described as sleeping, we then have the Qal imperfect of ʿûph (עָוַף) [pronounced gôopf], which is translated both *to fly* (Job 5:7 Isa. 11:14) and *to be weary* (Judges 4:21 1 Sam. 14:25). However, I think I can explain what the connection is. The actual correct rendering of this verb is *to flutter*; when referring to the wings of the bird, this means *to fly*. When referring to the eyelids of a person, this means that they are in the stage of sleep which is the REM period (rapid eye movement); in other words, Sisera was in a deep sleep and he was dreaming.

⁶⁸ The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 333.

Judges 4:21h

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
mûwth (מָוֹת) [pronounced mooth]	to die; to perish, to be destroyed	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

Translation: ...and then he died. Because of what will follow in the next verse, it does not appear as though he died immediately, but that we was rendered harmless; and died slowly.

Edersheim: *All seems lawful to her in such an undertaking; every means sanctified by the end in view. She has laid the worn warrior to rest; she has given him for refreshment of the best her tent affords. And now, as he lied in heavy-sleep, she stealthily withdraws one of the long iron spikes to which the tent-cords are fastened, and with a heavy hammer...strikes it into his temples. It is not long before Barak...has reached the spot. Jael lifts aside the tent-curtain and shows him the gory corpse. In silence, Barak turns from the terrible spectacle. But the power of Jabin and his dominion are henceforth for ever destroyed.*⁶⁹

Commentators give a mixed review of what Jael has done here.

Commentators Weigh in on Jael's Act

Commentator	Opinion
Barnes	Barnes was taken aback by this act, but saw it as righteous: <i>If we can overlook the treachery and violence which belonged to the morals of the age and country, and bear in mind Jael's ardent sympathies with the oppressed people of God, her faith in the right of Israel to possess the land in which they were now slaves, her zeal for the glory of Yahweh as against the gods of Canaan, and the heroic courage and firmness with which she executed her deadly purpose, we shall be ready to yield to her the praise which is her due.</i> ⁷⁰
Edersheim	Concerning the morality of what Jael did, there is a great deal of discussion. Given all this, I think that Edersheim, whose style I begin to enjoy more and more, most eloquently best expresses his opinion: <i>There is, as it seems to us, not a word in Scripture to express its approbation of so horrible a deed of deceit and violence—no, not even in the praise which Deborah in her song bestows upon Jael. It was not like Deborah's war, nor like Barak's battle, but strictly Kenite. Her allegiance to the cause of the people of God, her courage, her zeal, were Israelitish; their fanatical, wild, unscrupulous manifestation belonged to the race from which she has sprung, to the traditions amidst which she had been nurtured, and to the fiery blood which coursed in her veins—they were not of God nor of His word, but of her time and race. Heathen history tells of similar deeds, and records them with the highest praise;⁷¹ Scripture with solemn silence. Yet even so, Jehovah reigns, and the fierce Arab was the sword in His hand!</i> ⁷² In re-reading this, it is difficult to determine which side Edersheim comes down on. Sounds as if he's in favor of what she did.

⁶⁹ Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 353.

⁷⁰ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:21.

⁷¹ For example in the case of aretaphila in Cyrene (Plutarch, "The virtues of Women, 19).

⁷² Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 353.

Commentators Weigh in on Jael's Act

Commentator	Opinion
Gill	Gill saw this as a righteous act: <i>When she perceived he was fast asleep, and it being now put into her heart to kill him, having an impulse upon her spirit, which she was persuaded, by the effect it had upon her, that it was of God; not filling her with malice and revenge, but a concern for the glory of God, the interest of religion, and the good of Israel, she took this method to effect the death of this enemy of God, and his people; having no arms in the house, for the Kenites used none, she took up an iron pin.</i> ⁷³
Matthew Henry	Henry believed that she was divinely inspired to take Sisera's life: <i>Whether she designed this or no when she invited him into her tent does not appear; probably the thought was darted into her mind when she saw him lie so conveniently to receive such a fatal blow; and, doubtless, the thought brought with it evidence sufficient that it came not from Satan as a murderer and destroyer, but from God as a righteous judge and avenger, so much of brightness and heavenly light did she perceive in the inducements to it that offered themselves, the honour of God and the deliverance of Israel, and nothing of the blackness of malice, hatred, or personal revenge. (1.) It was a divine power that enabled her to do it, and inspired her with a more than manly courage. What if her hand should shake, and she should miss her blow? What if he should awake when she was attempting it? Or suppose some of his own attendants should follow him, and surprise her in the face, how dearly would she and all hers be made to pay for it? Yet, obtaining help of God, she did it effectually. (2.) It was a divine warrant that justified her in the doing of it; and therefore, since no such extraordinary commissions can now be pretended, it ought not in any case to be imitated. The laws of friendship and hospitality must be religiously observed, and we must abhor the thought of betraying any whom we have invited and encouraged to put a confidence in us. And, as to this act of Jael (like that of Ehud in the chapter before), we have reason to think she was conscious of such a divine impulse upon her spirit to do it as did abundantly satisfy herself (and it ought therefore to satisfy us) that it was well done. God's judgments are a great deep.</i> ⁷⁴
Jamieson, Fausset and Brown	These saw this as an awful act: <i>The taking of his life by the hand of Jael was murder. It was a direct violation of all the notions of honor and friendship that are usually held sacred among pastoral people, and for which it is impossible to conceive a woman in Jael's circumstances to have had any motive, except that of gaining favor with the victors. Though predicted by Deborah [Judges 4:9], it was the result of divine foreknowledge only—not the divine appointment or sanction; and though it is praised in the song [Judges 5:24–27], the eulogy must be considered as pronounced not on the moral character of the woman and her deed, but on the public benefits which, in the overruling providence of God, would flow from it.</i> ⁷⁵

⁷³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:21.

⁷⁴ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:17–24.

⁷⁵ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; from e-sword, Judges 4:21.

Commentators Weigh in on Jael’s Act

Commentator	Opinion
<p>Keil and Delitzsch</p>	<p>Keil and Delitzsch see the act as part of God’s plan, but sinful, nonetheless: <i>The Lord had sold Sisera into the hand of a woman, and deprived Barak of the glory of the victory. Nevertheless the act itself was not morally justified, either by this prophetic announcement, or by the fact that it is commemorated in the song of Deborah in Judges 5:24. Even though there can be no doubt that Jael acted under the influence of religious enthusiasm for the cause of Israel and its God, and that she was prompted by religious motives to regard the connection of her tribe with Israel, the people of the Lord, as higher and more sacred, not only than the bond of peace, in which her tribe was living with Jabin the Canaanitish king, but even than the duties of hospitality, which are so universally sacred to an oriental mind, her heroic deed cannot be acquitted of the sins of lying, treachery, and assassination, which were associated with it, by assuming as Calovius, Buddeus, and others have done, that when Jael invited Sisera into her tent, and promised him safety, and quenched this thirst with milk, she was acting with perfect sincerity, and without any thought of killing him, and that it was not till after he was fast asleep that she was instigated and impelled instinctu Dei arcano to perform the deed. For Jehovah, the God of Israel, not only abhors lying lips (Prov. 12:22), but hates wickedness and deception of every kind. It is true, He punishes the ungodly at the hand of sinners; but the sinners whom He employs as the instruments of His penal justice in carrying out the plans of His kingdom, are not instigated to the performance of wicked deeds by an inward and secret impulse from Him. God had no doubt so ordered it, that Sisera should meet with his death in Jael’s tent, where he had taken refuge; but this divine purpose did not justify Jael in giving to the enemy of Israel a hospitable reception into her tent, making him feel secure both by word and deed, and then murdering him secretly while he was asleep. Such conduct as that was not the operation of the Spirit of God, but the fruit of a heroism inspired by flesh and blood; and even in Deborah’s song (Judges 5:24.) it is not lauded as a divine act.</i>⁷⁶</p>
<p>Kukis (1999)</p>	<p>Let me add that just because something is prophesied, does not mean that it is God’s will that it happen. In other words, just because Deborah predicted that a woman would rob Barak of his victory, this does not in itself justify the act. Jael probably tolerated the Canaanites and the rule of Jabin enforced by Sisera, and possibly even profited somewhat by it. Now it appeared to be expedient to realign herself with the Israelites. I’m not robbing her of her motives, which may have been good; what I am saying is that her actions are open to debate and the Bible does not really provide us with a complete enough picture to make such a judgement. Whereas Barnes and Keil and Delitzsch appear shocked and appalled at her actions, I don’t share their viewpoint, nor do I disagree with them. There just isn’t enough information provided. Given what we have in the Bible, we don’t even know if she was deceitful. Obviously, Sisera was misled; however, he believed what he wanted to believe. All we know for certain is that whatever human glory which would have rightfully fallen upon Barak fell partially upon Jael instead.</p> <p>Since I wrote this 8 years ago, I have come to the opinion that Jael is doing God’s will, and that she is to be honored for this act. I will explain further, after listing the remaining opinion.</p>

⁷⁶ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Judges 4:22.

Commentators Weigh in on Jael's Act

Commentator	Opinion
Wesley	John Wesley tells us that it all depends: <i>This is said upon supposition that Jael acted deceitfully in this affair; but if we suppose, which is much more likely, that Jael fully intended to afford Sisera the shelter and protection which he sought of her, but was afterwards by the immediate direction of heaven ordered to kill him, the whole difficulty vanishes, and the character both of Jael and of Deborah remains unimpeached.</i> ⁷⁷

I must admit that, given this chapter alone, I would find it difficult to make a determination here, although I would lean toward that which gave Israel back her independence. However, the Bible tells us how God feels about this act, in the words of Deborah, the prophetess, who records her opinion as a part of holy Scripture: **Jael is most blessed of women, the wife of Heber the Kenite; she is most blessed among tent-dwelling women. He asked for water; she gave him milk. She brought him curdled milk in a majestic bowl. She reached for a tent peg, her right hand, for a workman's mallet. Then she hammered Sisera—she crushed his head; she shattered and pierced his temple** (Judges 5:24–26).

Did God appear to Jael and either tell her to do this or did He guide her? *That* is something that we do not know (although the absence of any mention of this in Deborah's song suggests that God did not); however, what we clearly know is that God approves of what Jael did.

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We need some summary points here:

Summary Points on Jael and Personal Application

1. First off, we must approach what Jael did from God's viewpoint: this was a righteous act, and Deborah, filled with God the Holy Spirit, tells us that Jael is blessed above all women.
2. Israel is at war with Canaan. What is the invisible is, God is at war with the gods of Canaan.
3. God has clearly placed His divine stamp on the nation Israel; He took Israel out of Egypt, which required great violence and killing; and God worked through Joshua in order to take the land, which also involved great violence and killing.
4. God's acts must be recognized as functions of His love, righteousness and justice.
5. Nowhere in Scripture can we condemn or question what God did in moving Israel into the Land of Promise and then establishing her as a nation there. In the New Testament, in Heb. 11, which establishes the great heroes of faith, the acts of Moses to bring Israel out of Egypt; and two occurrences which took place during the establishment of Israel as a nation are seen as functions of great faith. Therefore, we cannot go against Holy Writ and disregard these acts as vicious, sinful or wrong.
6. Therefore, there are times when killing is a righteous act—killing the enemy in war and executing criminals are two obvious acts; killing a criminal in order to protect your loved ones is also completely legitimate. The person unwilling to defend his own family in this sort of situation should be seen as worse than an infidel.
7. Therefore, even though Jael's act involved duplicity and violence, that does not make it an unrighteous act (Rahab the Prostitute is a similar case, and she is praised in Scripture as well). Sisera was very likely a killer and an idolater. Although we are given none of his background, we may reasonably assume that he has killed Jews and Kenites in order to establish Canaanite control over Israeli territory.
8. Here's the deal: except in cases of great national apostasy, the average person is not called upon to take the life of another person. Percentage-wise, you will probably not have to defend your family by taking another's life; you will probably not have to fight in a war to defend your country; and you will probably never have to pull the switch on a murderous criminal; however, God does enable and empower many of those who are willing to put their lives on the line for our freedom, and we should respect them for their bravery

⁷⁷ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Judges 4:21.

Summary Points on Jael and Personal Application

- and strength of conviction.
9. Now, just so you don't take this too far the other way: there is no justification in Scripture ever given for revolution, for assassinating the leader of your established country; or for being a vigil ante. Paul, under Roman law, was able to evangelize throughout the Roman empire; Paul was also persecuted by the Roman government for being an evangelist. At no time did Paul ever call for the overthrow of Rome or for the deaths of any rulers in Rome.
 10. As a Kenite, Jael had been at peace with the Jews for hundreds of years; the land of Canaan was essentially her land as well. Jabin and Sisera had come in to conquer this land, and Jael is acting in defense of her own country. This is not too different from a Christian who immigrates to modern Israel, becomes a citizen there, and is called upon to defend Israel in their army. This would be his duty as a citizen of Israel.
 11. As allies of Israel, we as a nation have a duty toward Israel to help defend her against encroachment by the many evil Arab factions who would like nothing more than to destroy Israel as a nation.
 12. The biggest problem that commentators have here is Jael's lying and deception. Given what Rahab the Harlot did back in Judges 2, and how she is commemorated in Scripture for this, we may reasonably assume that, in times of war, there is a lot which is acceptable, which is not permitted for normal human discourse. Obviously, in war, killing is allowed. Therefore, we should not be shocked to find that lying and deception are also allowable weapons against the enemy. We have national security organizations and covert operations which involve lying to our enemies, deceiving our enemies, and killing our enemies; these are legitimate functions in war.
 13. In saying this, we cannot make the similar assertion that, when two companies are in competition, that this is a war, and that lying and deception are legitimate. That would be a misapplication. Obviously, you don't get to kill off the executives or the workers in rival businesses; and that should be an indication that deception and lying are not allowed either.
 14. In fact, I don't really see any justification for toppling national leaders of other countries because it is politically expedient or politically correct. For instance, we, as a nation, had no business being involved in the overthrow of the Shah of Iran, which had great popular support but was ultimately a bad political move. Similarly, we had no business in our sanctions against apartheid governments in Rhodesia and South Africa. That was simply governmental self-righteousness on our part. On the other hand, I think it is reasonable that we toppled the government of Saddam Hussein, given his war crimes (in the 20th century, Saddam ranks #13 in a list of the greatest killers of that century).
 15. If you ever have a internal conflict concerning our nation going to war; concerning our nation's *sinfulness*, say, in regards to, for instance, Viet Nam, then consider several things:
 - a. Is the United States a client nation? That is, are Jews given refuge here and are Jews abroad treated fairly and honorably? Is the Word of God taught unhindered within our country? Do we send out missionaries? Answering yes to these questions indicates that we are a client nation to God.
 - b. What about the nations with whom we are in conflict? What is their relationship to the Jews? What is their relationship to Christianity? What is their relationship to the Word of God?
 - c. What about the motives of our nation? In Viet Nam, the principle motive was to stop the spread of Communism and to protect our allies in South Viet Nam (who died by the millions when we exited that country).
 - d. Do not misinterpret these points—I am no suggesting that we become involved in a holy war to take over some piece of ground from a nation of heathen; however, when our nation is at war, then consider those points.
 - e. Also bear in mind, that at no time does the Bible support pacifism with respect to war. Paul, in all of his writings, never encourages believers to exit the army. Jesus spoke to several soldiers and never did he put a flower in their gun or tell them to put down their weapons forever. Always recall the passage, *your sin will find you out!* In context, this refers to the sin of pacifism.
 16. I don't want you to be confused by my position; I was raised, essentially, as a pacifist; the ideals of Gandhi were a part of my bringing up. I was not raised a conservative. When I first heard favorable statements made about the military in church, I must admit to be taken aback. My point is, the views here are Bible

Summary Points on Jael and Personal Application

doctrine; they are not the result of my upbringing or of a innate set of values which I was raised with. For me to take the positions which I take, I had to go against not only my upbringing, but against my very nature.

17. So that you are able to properly interpret other passages, when Jesus urges His followers to turn the other cheek, this is a matter of a personal affront. This is not a reference to protecting your family nor does it refer to the actions of a nation. That is, when the World Trade Center was taken down, we should not have *turned the other cheek* and offered Arab terrorists a clean shot at the Sears Tower or at the Empire State Building. When someone does wrong to you on a personal level—which does not involve criminal behavior—that is when you turn the other cheek. You do not seek revenge; you do not try to take matters into your own hands; you do not sue the offending party and every friend they have.
18. I know that I have started to go off on tangents, but there are a lot of misconceptions out there concerning Scripture, and a lot of misapplication of Scripture. War is one of the greatest areas of confusion for certain believers (particularly those with a similar background to mine).
- 19.

I hope that you can see that this narrative and Jael's actions are related to us and to our nation today. We need to first properly understand Jael's actions in their historical context; and then apply them to us today.

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When dealing with any portion of the Bible, we have to take care not to begin with a false conclusion, and ride that on unto the end.

Clarke's False Premises and False Conclusion

1. There was peace between her family and the king of Canaan.
2. That peace was no doubt made, as all transactions of the kind were, with a sacrifice and an oath.
3. Sisera, knowing this, came to her tent with the utmost confidence.
4. She met him with the most friendly greetings and assurances of safety.
5. Having asked for water, to show her friendship and respect she gave him cream, and that in a vessel suitable to his dignity.
6. She put him in the secret part of her own tent, and covered him in such a way as to evidence her good faith, and to inspire him with the greater confidence.
7. She agreed to keep watch at the door, and deny his being there to any that might inquire.
8. As she gave him permission to secrete himself with her, and gave him refreshment, she was bound by the rules of Asiatic hospitality to have defended his life, even at the risk of her own.
9. Notwithstanding, she took the advantage of his weariness and deep sleep, and took away his life!
10. She exulted in her deed, met Barak, and showed him in triumph what she had done.¹

Now do we not find, in all this, bad faith, deceit, deep hypocrisy, lying, breach of treaty, contempt of religious rites, breach of the laws of hospitality, deliberate and unprovoked murder? But what can be said in her justification? All that can be said, and all that has been said is simply this: "She might have been sincere at first, but was afterwards Divinely directed to do what she did." If this was so, she is sufficiently vindicated by the fact; for God has a right to dispose of the lives of his creatures as he pleases: and probably the cup of Sisera's iniquity was full, and his life already forfeited to the justice of God. But does it appear that she received any such direction from God? There is no sufficient evidence of it: it is true that Deborah, a prophetess, declares her blessed above women; and this seems to intimate that her conduct was pleasing to God. If Deborah was inspired on this occasion, her words are a presumptive proof that the act was right; unless we are to understand it as a simple declaration of the reputation she should be held in among her own sex. But we do not find one word from Jael herself, stating how she was led to do an act repugnant to her feelings as a woman, contrary to good faith, and a breach of the rules of hospitality. Nor does the sacred penman say one word to explain the case; as in the case of Ehud, he states the fact, and leaves his readers to form their own opinion. To say, as has been said in the case of Eglon, that "Sisera was a public enemy, and any of the people whom he oppressed might be justified

Clarke's False Premises and False Conclusion

in taking away his life," is a very dangerous position, as it refers one of the most solemn acts of judgment and justice to the caprice, or prejudice, or enthusiastic feeling of every individual who may persuade himself that he is not only concerned in the business, but authorized by God to take vengeance by his own hand. While justice and law are in the world, God never will, as he never did, abandon cases of this kind to the caprice, prejudice, or party feeling, of any man. The conduct of Ehud and Jael are before the tribunal of God: I will not justify, I dare not absolutely condemn; there I leave them, and entreat my readers to do the like; after referring them to the observations at the end of the preceding chapter, where the subject is considered more at large.²

Here is Clarke's basic problem: he wants to read somewhere in this context that what Jael does is right and just and that God so directed her to do this. If he cannot find God directing Jael to do this, then she must be guilty of *bad faith, deceit, lying, breach of treaty and murder*. Throughout the Old Testament, the Gospels and the Book of Acts, we have narrative and we have men doing this or that. In some cases, it is clear whether their choices and/or actions are right or wrong; and in other cases, such as this one, their integrity is questionable.

1 Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:24.

2 Ibid.

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Now, I have already covered why Jael is right to act as she did; and that she is a woman to be praised, not a deceitful bitch to be denigrated. We do not need to cover the ground again. However, we need to look at the interpretation of narrative in a more general way, and apply it to this passage.

Principles which we Use to Interpret this Passage and Jael's Actions

1. There are times that we must compare Scripture with Scripture.
2. First of all, we go to Scriptures which reference this particular event in question. In this case, Judges 5 deals with the same event, and Jael is praised. Judges 4 does not make any specific judgments about what Jael has done.
3. Secondly, we go to accounts of similar events, and determine how they relate to the actions which have occurred. The best place for us to go is, Rahab the Prostitute in Joshua 2, which is almost a parallel situation. We have a woman who lies and the result is, much of her city, apart from her family, is destroyed. How are we to view Rahab? The Scripture clearly praises her. Therefore, we may reasonably apply the same standards to Jael.
4. Finally, we go to various doctrines which we have studied and see if they apply. We know that murder is wrong, but that killing, under certain circumstances, is not. It is only reasonable that, in similar circumstances, those things which are usually sinful, may not be considered sins; e.g., lying and deceit.
5. If the act of killing is appropriate in some instances, then what we may view as a lesser sin—lying—might also be understood as acceptable. I dislike hypotheticals, but if thieves have broken into your home, and your children are safely hidden in your home, but you are not, and these thieves ask you if you are alone, you will probably lie to them, and you will not be out of fellowship for doing so. In this same situation, if you feel that your life is threatened, if you are able to kill those who have invaded your home, this would not be murder.
6. A much more common hypothetical is being at war with another nation—killing the enemy is a good thing; it is the right thing to do. If you are in a situation where you must lie or deceive your enemy, this is also legitimate.

Do you begin to understand why we have passages like this? Do you begin to understand why there are passages which deal with Rahab the Prostitute? They are here in Scripture so that the believer in Jesus Christ can engage in war, can protect his family, and not sin, nor be conflicted about their actions. As I recall Bob Thieme Jr. saying on occasion, a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is in the armed forces, should be the best killer in his outfit. That is honoring to God.

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And lo! Barak was pursuing Sisera and so went out Jael to meet him and so she said to him, "Come and I will show you the man whom you are seeking." And so he went unto her and lo! Sisera laying dying and the tent spike in his temple.

Judges
4:22

Meanwhile [lit., *and lo!*] Barak was [still] pursuing Sisera. So 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 into her [tent] and saw that [lit., *lo!*] Sisera was laying [on the ground] dying; the tent spike in his temple.

Finally, up came Barak, still in pursuit of Sisera. Jael went out and flagged him down, saying, "Come here and I will give to you the man you are seeking." So Barak went into her tent and saw Sisera laying there dying, with a tent spike in his temple.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And lo! Barak was pursuing Sisera and so went out Jael to meet him and so she said to him, "Come and I will show you the man whom you are seeking." And so he went unto her and lo! Sisera laying dying and the tent spike in his temple.

Septuagint

And, behold, Barac was pursuing Sisara: and Jael went out to meet him, and she [or, *he*] said to him, "Come, and I will show you the man whom you seek." And he went in to her; and, behold, Sisara was fallen dead, and the pin was in his temple.

Significant differences:

The verb in the Greek does not convey gender; only person and number. In the Hebrew, it appears as though Barak comes in and Sisera is laying on the ground, dying. In the LXX, we have *falling* instead in the perfect active participle. This means that he has fallen down in the past with results that continue (he is still on the ground). Whereas the participle in the Hebrew often connotes continuous action (as we find here), the participle in the Greek functions often more as an adjective (this is an oversimplification). All that being duly noted, the Greek translated a participle with a participle. The gist of this is, Barak probably does walk in to find Sisera in the process of dying; however, this is not clear in the Greek.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

Meanwhile, Barak had been following Sisera, and Jael went out to meet him. "The man you're looking for is inside," she said. "Come in and I'll show him to you." They went inside, and there was Sisera--dead and stretched out with a tent-peg through his skull.

The Message

Barak arrived in pursuit of Sisera. Jael went out to greet him. She said, "Come, I'll show you the man you're looking for." He went with her and there he was--Sisera, stretched out, dead, with a tent peg through his neck. I have no idea how Jael drove a tent peg through Sisera's temple (as per the previous verse in the Message, and yet, here we find it in his neck.

REB

When Barak came by in pursuit of Sisera, Jael went out to meet him. 'Come,' she said, 'I shall show you the man you are looking for.' He went in with her, and there was Sisera lying dead with the tent-peg in his temple.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

Barak was still pursuing Sisera. When Jael came out of her tent, she met him. She said to him, "Come in! I have something to show you—the man you've been looking for." So Barak went into her tent. He saw Sisera lying there dead with the tent peg through his temples.

HCSB

When Barak arrived in pursuit of Sisera, Jael went out to greet him and said to him, "Come and I will show you the man you are looking for." So he went in with her, and there was Sisera lying dead with a tent peg through his temple!

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

LTHB

And, behold, as Barak followed 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 came in to her, and, behold! Sisera had fallen dead *with* the peg in his temple.

Young's Updated LT

And lo, Barak is pursuing Sisera, and Jael comes out to meet him, and says to him, "Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking;" and he comes in unto her, and lo, Sisera is fallen—dead, and the pin in his temples.

What is the gist of this verse? Barak, all this time, was in direct pursuit of Sisera. When he comes to the tent of Jael, she meets him and tells Barak that she will lead him to Sisera, informing him that he is dying

Judges 4:22a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
Bârâq (בָּרָק) [pronounced <i>baw-RAWK</i>]	<i>lightening, lightening flash; transliterated Barak</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #1301 BDB #140
râdaph (רָדַף) [pronounced <i>raw-DAHf</i>]	<i>to pursue, to follow after; to chase with hostile intent, to persecute</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #7291 BDB #922
êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Çîyç ^e râ ^ʾ (צִיִּצְרָא) [pronounced <i>sees^e-RAW</i>]	<i>battle array</i> [according to BDB]; and is transliterated <i>Sisera</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #5516 BDB #696

Translation: *Meanwhile* [lit., *and lo!*] *Barak was [still] pursuing Sisera.* Sisera had been moving quite quickly and Barak, not the bravest of men, was pursuing him, but perhaps not so quickly. The time period for Sisera to fall asleep? Personally, I can even go for a 30 minute run, come back, and fall asleep within 15 minutes if I am tired enough. Sisera moved from being pumped full of adrenalin to REM in probably 15 to 20 minutes at the most.

This does tell us, by the way, that Barak personally pursued Sisera, although his men apparently pursued the Canaanite army all the way back to their gathering place at Harosheth. As discussed before, I believe that these are two different directions—that is, Sisera was careful to go off on his own.

Judges 4:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-TZAWH</i>]	<i>to go out, to come out, to come forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
Yâ'êl (יָעַל) [pronounced <i>yaw-ĠALE</i>]	transliterated <i>Jael</i>	feminine singular, proper noun	Strong's #3278 BDB #418
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to encounter, to befall, to meet; to assemble [for the purpose of encountering God or exegeting His Word]; to come, to assemble</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7122 & #7125 BDB #896

Translation: [So Jael went out to meet him...](#) I want you to notice the contrast here. We have the exact same verbiage as we found in v. 18, when Jael went out to meet Sisera; however, in each case, she has an entirely different purpose. She went out to meet Sisera to draw him into her tent, apparently with the intention of killing him. However, she had respect toward Barak. Very likely, we are only getting a portion of their conversation. Barak may have seen her; she moves out to meet him; he introduces himself and asks if she has seen Sisera, and as he begins to describe him, she give Barak his answer.

Judges 4:22c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
It is typical in the Hebrew for each sentence—in fact, each thought—to begin with a wâw consecutive in the Hebrew. However, it is not necessary in an English translation to include a connective at every such juncture, as our language does not necessarily require that for successive thoughts or actions.			
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Judges 4:22c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	go, come, depart, walk; advance	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

Translation: ...and said to him, "Come..." We are only told what Jael said to Barak. Certainly, God could have informed her that Barak was coming and to be on the lookout for him; but it is just as reasonable for Barak to begin describing whom he was after, and for Jael to tell him, "Come..."

Whether Barak is alone or whether he has a small contingent of soldiers with him, we do not know. It seems most reasonable that he is traveling with a small band of soldiers who chose to go off the beaten path to pursue Sisera; even though these soldiers are not mentioned or named.

Judges 4:22d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
râ`âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	to cause to see, to cause to look; to cause to see [with pleasure]; to cause to know, to cause to learn; to cause to experience [evil or good]	1 st person singular, Hiphil imperfect; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
`êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally to, toward	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
`îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural); with the definite article	Strong's #376 BDB #35
`âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	that, which, when, who, whom	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
`attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced aht-TAW]	you (often, the verb to be is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
bâqash (בָּקַשׁ) [pronounced baw-KAHSH]	to seek, to search, to desire, to strive after, to attempt to get, to require, to demand, to ask, to seek with desire and diligence	Piel participle	Strong's #1245 BDB #134

Translation: ...and I will show you the man whom you are seeking." Again, Jael could have somehow divined this information, that Barak was after Sisera; but it makes just as much sense that Barak has described Sisera, the man he was after, to her, and she then said, "I will show you the man [for] whom you are seeking." That seems

like such a natural response, as opposed to Jael just coming out of the blue and saying it. It also makes sense that there would have been a conversation rather than Jael doing all of the talking.

Judges 4:22e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (אל) [pronounced <i>eternal life</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: [So he went into her \[tent\]...](#) Barak, just as Sisera before him, enters into Jael's tent. The pronoun *her* is a metonym for Jael's tent. That is, nothing untoward is occurring here between Barak and Jael; when it reads that Barak goes in unto her, it is a reference to going into her tent.

Judges 4:22f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (תִּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
Çîyç ^e râ' (אֲרִיסָרָא) [pronounced <i>sees^e-RAW</i>]	<i>battle array [according to BDB]; and is transliterated Sisera</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #5516 BDB #696
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced <i>naw-FAHL</i>]	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply; to desert</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
mûwth (מָוַת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i>]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

Translation: [...and saw that \[lit., lo!\] Sisera was laying \[on the ground\] dying;...](#) The verbs *laying* and *dying* are both in the present active participle. My guess is that his body was still convulsing when Jael brought Barak into her tent. You will recall what Deborah said to Barak: [“I will certainly go with you; however, the honor will not be yours on the journey that you are about to take, for Jehovah will sell Sisera into the hands of a woman.”](#) (Judges 4:9b). Deborah is a prophetess and not referring to herself but referring to what would transpire in the future. The idea is, what Barak did was heroic and wonderful; but, in his lifetime, and for several generations which follow, Jael's killing of Sisera eclipses what Barak has done. What a story for their time: Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, single-handedly

kills Sisera, the mighty general of the Canaanites, the scourge of all Israel! Barak is obviously a trained soldier and a brave man; but how amazing that this little woman does what all Israel has been unable to do over the past 20 years.

Judges 4:22g			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^ə (or v ^ə) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâthêd (תַּתְּי) [pronounced <i>yaw-THADE</i>]	<i>pin, stake, nail, peg</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3489 BDB #450
b ^ə (ב) [pronounced <i>bəh</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
raqqâh (רַקַּחַ) [pronounced <i>rahk-KAW</i>]	<i>temple, side of head</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7541 BDB #956

Translation: ...the tent spike in his temple. As a Kenite aligned with the Jews living in the land which God had given them, Jael had the moral duty to defend this land against all aggressions.

Application: Now, when it comes to personal application, God is not the ruler of our nation, although we are, for the time being, a client nation to God.⁷⁸ Therefore, we do not have the right to destroy any group of peoples because we believe that they are dangerous to America. In other words, there are no Canaanites living within our borders that God has given us the directive to remove. We do not even have the right to remove homosexuals or atheists from this land, although they are in opposition to God (the simple reason is that all mankind, apart from salvation, are in opposition to God; you and I out of fellowship are in opposition to God; a legalistic believer—despite his high morality—is in opposition to God). What I am trying to do is to keep you from making any false applications here. Certainly the idea of going out and assassinating one of our own rulers, despite his opinions and actions, is completely out of the will of God. Paul, while under a system of government which did some persecution of believers and under a governmental system that resulted in his wrongful execution, still wrote: **Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God and those that exist are established by God. Therefore, he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same, for government is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid, for it does not bear the sword for nothing, for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the ones who practice evil. Therefore, it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience sake. Because of this, you also pay taxes, for rulers are the servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing (Rom. 13:1–6).** Now, if you want to march, carry placards, vote for candidates, work for candidates, support various and sundry legislation, that is all well and good. However, the moment you break the law to do anything other than to spread the gospel, you are outside the boundaries of God's will.

Let me see if I can explain how Barak felt: you are a football player at *the* big game—your last game—the ball is snapped to you in the last 30 seconds of the game, and you fumble it. Then the ball is passed to Jael, your female teammate, and she catches it and runs for a touchdown, winning the game. How do you feel? Of course, you are

⁷⁸ This is one of the many terms peculiar to Bob Thieme. Without going into any great detail, this is a nation that has a relatively close relationship with God; a nation where evangelism occurs unhindered by law; a nation from which missionaries are sent.

happy that your team won; but, wouldn't it have been cooler if you had caught the final pass and run for a touchdown? Barak could have caught the final pass of the game, run for a touchdown, and been personally victorious as well as leading his team to victory. Instead, he fumbled the ball, and a woman took his glory. His team is victorious in either case, but it sure is much cooler when you lead your team to victory. All Barak had to do is believe God—nothing else. All the other details would have been worked out.

Application: Now, don't become confused at this point—you are not in some zero-sum competition with all other believers and you do not need to hog the ball and run for every touchdown. Maybe I should leave the analogy for a bit. All you need to do is to know God's Word and then you need to take God at His Word. You will glorify God with your actions and the final result is going to be a lot like you running the ball in the final quarter for the winning touchdown. By the way, it does not matter if you are a pastor-teacher or if you are a person who prays fervently 20 times a day (assuming that is your gift) whom no one knows. That all changes in eternity. What matters is your faith and your faithfulness.

Application: So you say, "But I don't know my spiritual gift...I have no idea if I am suppose to block, tackle, run out and take the pass, or what." That simply means that you do not have enough doctrine; you have not been faithful; and you have not shown much faith. Most of the time, when you say *I don't know*; that means you do not have enough doctrine in your soul. If you hop in your car and cannot figure out, *do I make a left turn, a right turn; what does God want me to do?* Again, the problem is, *you do not know God's Word; you do not have enough Bible doctrine in your soul.* Personally, in the many years that I have been a believer, I have rarely had any difficulty figuring out what God wanted me to do; what I have had a problem with is *doing* what God wants me to do. And *no*, God does not send me mental messages, emails, or leave directives on my phone machine. I don't sit around in deep thought, meditating, and listening for the still, soft voice of God inside. Don't get me wrong—there are times when you need to stop, take a step back, and think about what you are doing—and determine what to do next. But, with Bible doctrine in your soul, the biggest problem will never be *what should I do*, but *am I willing to do it?*

With the army of Sisera destroyed and Sisera dead, the dominance of Jabin was at an end. You cannot rule over a plot of land without enforcement and Jabin could not longer enforce his ascendancy over Israel.

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Israel Is Victorious over Jabin and the Canaanites

And so subdued God in the day the that Jabin, king of Canaan before faces of sons of Israel. Judges 4:23 **So God subdued Jabin, king of Canaan, in that day before the face of the sons of Israel.**

Thus, God subdued Jabin, the king of Canaan, before Israel in that day.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so subdued God in the day the that Jabin, king of Canaan before faces of sons of Israel.

Septuagint So God routed Jabin king of Chanaan in that day before the children of Israel.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV That same day the Israelites defeated the Canaanite King Jabin, and his army was no longer powerful enough to attack the Israelites.

REB That day God gave victory to the Israelites over King Jabin of Canaan,...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ So on that day, God used the people of Israel to crush the power of King Jabin of Canaan.

HCSB That day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan before the Israelites.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV So on that day God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the people of Israel.

Young's Updated LT And God humbles on that day Jabin king of Canaan before the sons of Israel.

What is the gist of this verse? This verse tells us that God subdued Jabin, the king of Canaan, before Israel in that day.

Judges 4:23			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
kâna' (כָּנַעַן) [pronounced kaw-NAHG]	to bow down, to bring anyone low, to humble, to subdue	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3665 BDB #488
'êlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	gods, foreign gods, god; God; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	day; time; today (with a definite article)	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced hoo]	that, this	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun (with the definite article)	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
The bēyth preposition, yôwm and hûw (with definite articles) mean <i>in that day, on that day, in [on] the same day.</i>			
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally to, toward	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Yâbîyn (יָבִין) [pronounced yaw-BEEN]	intelligent; God [is] intelligent; whom God observes; transliterated Jabin	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #2985 BDB #108
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced MEH-lek]	king, ruler, prince	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4428 BDB #572

Judges 4:23

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>κ^ēnaʿan (כְּנַעַן) [pronounced k^ēNAH- gahn]</p>	<p>which possibly means <i>merchant</i> and is transliterated <i>Canaan</i></p>	<p>masculine proper noun; territory</p>	<p>Strong's #3667 BDB #488</p>
<p>lâmed (ל) (pronounced l)</p>	<p><i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i></p>	<p>directional/relational preposition</p>	<p>No Strong's # BDB #510</p>
<p>pânîym (פְּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]</p>	<p><i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i></p>	<p>masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)</p>	<p>Strong's #6440 BDB #815</p>
<p>Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i>. When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i>. This can also mean <i>forwards; the front part</i> [or, the edge of a sword]. L^ēpânîym (לפְּנִים) can take on a temporal sense as well: <i>before, of old, formerly, in the past, in past times</i>.</p>			
<p>bânîym (בְּנִים) [pronounced baw-NEEM]</p>	<p><i>sons, descendants; sometimes rendered men</i></p>	<p>masculine plural construct</p>	<p>Strong's #1121 BDB #119</p>
<p>Yisʿrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw- ALE]</p>	<p>transliterated <i>Israel</i></p>	<p>masculine proper noun</p>	<p>Strong's #3478 BDB #975</p>

Translation: [So God subdued Jabin, king of Canaan, in that day before the face of the sons of Israel.](#) The first verb means *to humble, to subdue*. Up until this point, we don't know what is going on with Jabin. However, in allowing Israel to defeat Jabin's army, which was commanded by Sisera, this also meant that Jabin was defeated as well.

This and the next verse act as a summary of what was to occur. It does not appear as though Israel necessarily completely defeated the Canaanites on that particular 24-hour day. It does not appear as though Jabin was anywhere near this battle; however, this is the battle which broke Jabin's back. His top general is herein defeated; and we already observed that his main army was routed. All of this was God's doing, so that Israel could observe that God was acting on their behalf once again.

David writes: [Jehovah lives and blessed be my Rock and exalted be the God of my salvation, the God Who executes vengeance for me and subdues peoples under me. He delivers me from my enemies. Certainly, You lift me above those who rise up against me and you will rescue me from the violent man \(Psalm 18:46–48\).](#) And: [Blessed be Jehovah, my Rock, Who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle; my Grace and my Fortress, my Stronghold and my Deliverer, my Shield and He in Whom I take refuge; Who subdues peoples under me \(Psalm 144:1–2\).](#)

What we do not find is, a clear record Israel turning away from idolatry. We know that Israel did evil in the sight of God (Judges 4:1), and that, as a result, God put them under the control of Jabin, king of the Canaanites (Judges 4:2). However, all we are told after that is, Israel called out to God for help. Now, probably, individuals turned away from idolatry; it is possible that Deborah led Israel as a nation away from idolatry; however, nothing like that is recorded. What is important is, [the sons of Israel cried out to Jehovah](#). We are always focused on what we do for God. It is in our nature to try to earn or to deserve God's favor and blessing. However, even in the anthropopathisms of the book of Judges, we nowhere read that Israel turned away from idolatry and that *God was pleased with Israel*. Sometimes the turning from idolatry is mentioned and sometimes it is not. What is important is, [the sons of Israel cried out to Jehovah](#).

Application: You do not get to earn or deserve anything from God. You don't get to earn God's blessing. Our salvation is a grace operation, all the way. We deserve nothing from God; we cannot even complain to God that, *You made us this way; it is your fault we sin!* God's redemptive act toward mankind is beyond anything we can imagine; we are so undeserving; we are just like Hosea's wife, Gomer, who kept going out and having sex with other men; and finally, he came across her in a slave market, and she was being sold for a very low price; and he bought her and he loved her. When you can recognize that you are like Gomer—unfaithful and completely undeserving—and yet the recipient of Hosea's love and protection, then you get a much better idea of your relationship to God.

Application: Because of God's love, because He has redeemed us, we might respond to His love; but understand the order in which this occurs: **we love because He first loved us** (1John 4:9). This is how grace functions. We don't get to make ourselves righteous and presentable, and then we go to God with our hand out, saying, "We are so damn good now, God; give us some blessing. Give us a nice car and a new house and lots of money."

So, this is why we find in the book of Judges that Israel often just calls out to God, and that God hears Israel. Bear in mind that this occurs again and again during one of the greatest times of degeneracy in the nation Israel.

Application: Have you failed? Have you failed again? And again, and again, and again? God still loves us; God is still sovereign; God still calls the shots. We may have gotten ourselves into the most miserable of situations due to our sinfulness and rebellion, yet God is still here and God still loves us, and God is still looking to bless us. Do you know what you need to do? You need to call out to God.

Application: So, what do we do with our lives? Do we continue to sin, get ourselves into some corner of despair and call out to God? Well, if that is where we find ourselves, then, of course, you call out to God. However, once you have been under divine discipline enough, you might learn what to do and what not to do. You can only touch the hot burner on an oven so many times. Just don't get confused; don't think that your self-righteousness impresses God; don't think that God looks down at you and you have cleaned up your life so much that He just has to bless you. But, if you are back in fellowship, after a prolonged period of being out, then you should have more sense than to turn back to a life of continual sin.

Application: What you should be motivated to do is get to know the One Who loves you; get to know the God Who sent His only-born Son to die on your behalf. That is where Bible class comes into play. That is where you get to know the character of God, and His incredible, overwhelming graciousness.

Back to our narrative: although Josephus tells us⁷⁹ that Barak went towards Hazor and found Jabin and killed him, this verse and the one that follows makes it sound like this was more of a gradual process. This particular battle was decisive and marked the beginning of the end; but it does not appear as though it is the only battle fought.

And so went a hand of sons of Israel going and intense upon Jabin, king of Canaan until which they [caused to] cut off Jabin, king of Canaan.

Judges
4:24

So the severe [or, intense] hand of the sons of Israel continued going against Jabin, the king of Canaan, until they caused Jabin, king of Canaan, to be destroyed.

Israel continued their battle momentum against Jabin and brought him down as well.

The Hebrew here is quite interesting, so I will therefore give you a sampling of some of the translations:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so went a hand of sons of Israel going and intense upon Jabin, king of Canaan until which they [caused to] cut off Jabin, king of Canaan.

⁷⁹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, I. 5. c. 5. sect. 4.

Septuagint And the hand of the children of Israel prevailed more and more against Jabin king of Chanaan, until they utterly destroyed Jabin king of Chanaan.

Significant differences: The first difference is a matter of the Hebrew being very difficult to translate. Although the final verb appears to be different in the Greek, that is simply a matter of interpretation, as the Hebrew verb can essentially mean that.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV Jabin grew weaker while the Israelites kept growing stronger, and at last the Israelites destroyed him.

NLT And from that time on Israel became stronger and stronger against King Jabin, until they finally destroyed him.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ The Israelites became stronger and stronger until they destroyed him.

HCSB The power of the Israelites continued to increase against Jabin king of Canaan until they destroyed him.

NIV And the hand of the Israelites grew stronger and stronger against Jabin, the Canaanites king, until they destroyed him.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Emphasized Bible And the hand of the sons of Israel went on, waxing more and more heavy upon Jabin king of Canaan,—until they had cut off Jabin king of Canaan.

ESV 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.

NASB And 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.

Owen And bore the hand of the people of Israel harder and harder on Jabin the king of Canaan until they destroyed Jabin, king of Canaan.

WEB The hand of the children of Israel prevailed more and more against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

Young's Updated LT And the hand of the sons of Israel go, going on and becoming hard on Jabin king of Canaan, until that they have cut off Jabin king of Canaan.

One of the first things you will note when comparing the translations is that the NIV is not a translation of the individual words, per se, but a translation of general meaning. *Jabin, king of Canaan*, shows up twice in this verse in the Hebrew. In the NIV, we have *Jabin, the Canaanite king*; and only once. The next thing that you will notice is how different Owen's translation is compared to Young's. When they differ in a couple of key words, it is important to examine the Hebrew behind them. When they disagree in sentence structure and vocabulary in several areas, then we look at the various translations to try to make sense of the Hebrew.

What is the gist of this verse? Israel continued to stand up to the Canaanites until they finally defeated Jabin.

Judges 4:24a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (l) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Judges 4:24a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
bânîym (בְּנֵי) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i>]	<i>sons, descendants; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Yis ^e râ`êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw- ALE</i>]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

The **infinitive absolute** has four uses: ❶ when found alone, it sometimes acts as an English gerund, so that we may add *ing* to the end of the verb; ❷ When found directly before its verbal cognate, it serves to intensify or strengthen the action or the meaning of the verb which follows; ❸ When it follows its cognate verb, it emphasizes the duration or the continuation of the verbal idea; and, ❹ it is sometimes used as a substitute for a finite verb form.⁸⁰ Obviously, it is #3 which applies here.

Translation: ...*hand of the sons of Israel continued going...* We have a very common verb which means *to go, to come, to depart, to walk*. After *a hand of sons of Israel* we have the Qal infinitive absolute of the same verb. When the infinitive absolute is used after the same verb, what is suggested is an indefinitely prolonged state of the action; that is, what is emphasized is continuance or prevalence, rather than intensification of the verb.⁸¹ In other words, even though Sisera had been defeated, this was not the end of the war against the Canaanites for that particular period of time. It took awhile still for Israel to defeat Jabin. However, the turning point was here, at the death of Sisera in the hands of the woman Jael.

In order to make reasonable English sense out of this verse, I have changed around the word order somewhat, so I begin the sentence with what follows. These two portions of v. 24 together read: *So the severe [or, intense] hand of the sons of Israel continued going against Jabin, the king of Canaan,...* Rarely do I do this—change the word order around radically. In this case, it seems to make the most sense to me. In the Hebrew, the verb often comes before the subject of the sentence; and, in the English, it is the other way around. Therefore, in the reasonably literal translation, I follow the English convention. However, most of the time, I retain the order of the phrases. In this case, I felt I had to move them around somewhat; and if you examine the translations which I include, you can see that this was a difficult verse for many to translate.

⁸⁰ *Biblical Hebrew*; Page Kelley; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, pp. 184–185.

⁸¹ J.C.L. Gibson, *Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar~Syntax*; 4th Edition, © T&T Clark Ltd., 1994, p. 125.

Judges 4:24b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
qâsheh (קָשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>kaw-SHEH</i>]	<i>hard, severe, difficult, fierce, intense, vehement, stiff, harsh, stubborn</i>	adjective/noun	Strong's #7186 BDB #904
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
Yâbîyn (יָבִין) [pronounced <i>yaw-BEEN</i>]	<i>intelligent; God [is] intelligent; whom God observes; transliterated Jabin</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #2985 BDB #108
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced <i>MEH-lek</i>]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4428 BDB #572
K ^e naʿan (כְּנַעַן) [pronounced <i>k^eNAH-gahn</i>]	which possibly means <i>merchant</i> and is transliterated <i>Canaan</i>	masculine proper noun; territory	Strong's #3667 BDB #488

Translation: [So the severe \[or, intense\]...against Jabin, the king of Canaan...](#) After the wâw conjunction, we have the feminine singular adjective *hard, severe, difficult, fierce, intense, vehement, stiff, stubborn*. The feminine singular means that it refers back to the noun *hand*. Where we find this adjective, we want to render it as an adverb, since it is so close to the verb. However, we will have to move it in order for it to make more sense in the English.

Again, together, this gives us: [So the severe \[or, intense\] hand of the sons of Israel continued going against Jabin, the king of Canaan,...](#) The Hebrew itself essentially tells us how to put this verse together; the Qal infinitive absolute emphasizes duration or continuation of the action of the verb; so, we are not dealing with a single battle, but Israel goes after Jabin for a period of time. The adjective found here is a feminine singular, so it should be properly associated with the subject of the verb, which is [the hand of the sons of Israel](#). So, despite the difficulties one might first presume, this verse all comes together using basic rules of Hebrew grammar.

So Israel stepped up their military campaign against Jabin, as his main general had been killed and that army routed and completely defeated. There is no reason to assume that comprised Jabin's entire army; he would have certainly had a large personal detachment with himself; and he may have had armies occupying other areas. What is indicated here is, Israel continued to go after his armies. Barak began by gathering an army on Mount Tabor, and God brought Sisera's army to him; however, after that, Israel's army (which later included Ephraim, Benjamin, Issachar and Reuben—Judges 5:14–15). By the way, that in itself, along with the verbs found in this verse, tell us that this war was not completed after one battle.

Barnes concurs with this conclusion: *The meaning is, that Barak's great victory was the beginning of a successful resistance to Jabin, by which the Israelites recovered their independence, and finally broke the Canaanite power. Accordingly, we hear no more of Canaanite domination in the Book of Judges.*⁸²

⁸² Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:24.

Let's just set this up so it is easy to see; in this chapter and the next, we primarily cover just one battle—the battle between Barak and Sisera. However, these final two verses indicate that a war between Israel and Canaan continued even after this decisive battle. Therefore, let's simply catalogue the significant differences between the battle and the war, so that we do not get them mixed up.

A Comparison between Barak's Battle and Israel's War

Item	The Battle	The War
Tribes involved:	Zebulun and Naphtali.	Ephraim, Benjamin, Zebulun, Issachar, Naphtali, and a portion of the tribe of Reuben; some of Reuben and those east of the Jordan, Dan and Asher are criticized for not participating in this war.
The advance of Israel's army:	Israel gathers on Mount Tabor and Sisera brings his army to them.	Israel continues to pursue Jabin (and, presumably, his army).
Time frame:	This seems to have come to a conclusion within a day or two.	The overall war appears as though it may have been much more drawn out; whether a few months to a few years is unclear.
Ultimate victory:	Victory is accomplished in a very short time; Sisera's army was pursued to Harosheth, where virtually every soldier was killed. Sisera was killed by Jael in her tent.	Israel had to continue to advance until Jabin was cut off.

My intent is to present the Scriptures as accurately as possible; when dealing with narrative and distinguishing between events like these, I do my best to be accurate. Whether I will be able to apply any of this to your life or mine is something which I consider later after sorting out the facts of the narrative.

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Judges 4:24c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿad (עד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i>]	<i>while, so long as; to, even to [some certain limit]; even to [unto], unto; as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
ʾăšher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, ʿad and ʾăšher mean <i>until that, until</i> . Generally used of an event which occurred in the past.			
kāraṯh (כָּרַח) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAHTH</i>]	<i>to kill, to destroy [men]; to separate, to remove, to withdraw; to cut off, to cut down; to allow to perish</i>	3 rd person plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #3772 BDB #503

Judges 4:24c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Yâbîyn (יָבִין) [pronounced yaw-BEEN]	<i>intelligent; God [is] intelligent; whom God observes; transliterated Jabin</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #2985 BDB #108
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced MEH-lek]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4428 BDB #572
K ^e naʿan (כְּנָעַן) [pronounced k ^e NAH-ghan]	which possibly means <i>merchant</i> and is transliterated <i>Canaan</i>	masculine proper noun; territory	Strong's #3667 BDB #488

Translation: ...until they caused Jabin, king of Canaan, to be destroyed. The final verb in the Hiphil means *to kill, to destroy [men]; to separate, to remove, to withdraw; to cut off, to cut down; to allow to perish to cut off, to cut down*. So that you are never confused, in war, you press your enemy to unconditional surrender. There are times when Israel would wipe some nations off the face of the earth, with God's approval.

Gill writes: *[The Israelites] took Jabin, and put him to death, and took his cities, and destroyed the inhabitants of them, and so acted more agreeably to the declared will of God, that they should not spare the Canaanites, but destroy them.*⁸³ Matthew Henry presents a similar view: *The Israelites not only shook off Jabin's yoke by this day's victory, but they afterwards prosecuted the war against him, till they had destroyed him, he and his nation being by the divine appointment devoted to ruin and not to be spared. The Israelites, having soundly smarted for their foolish pity in not doing it before, resolved now it is in their power to indulge them no longer, but to make a thorough riddance of them, as a people to whom to show mercy was as contrary to their own interest as it was to God's command; and probably it is with an eye to the sentence they were under that this enemy is named three times here in these last two verses, and called king of Canaan; for as such he was to be destroyed; and so thoroughly was he destroyed that I do not remember to read of the kings of Canaan any more after this. The children of Israel would have prevented a great deal of mischief if they had sooner destroyed these Canaanites, as God had both commanded and enabled them; but better be wise late, and buy wisdom by experience, than never wise.*⁸⁴

This was a key victory for Israel. This broke the back of Canaanite dominance in Israel. We will never hear of the Canaanites again in the book of the Judges. They will no longer be presented as a national threat to Israel throughout the remainder of the Bible. This is a good thing.

Application: Since the Vietnam era, we have several generations of people who are confused about what happened. They believe that they ended the war in Vietnam and brought peace and happiness to this nation because the United States pulled out. The millions who subsequently died in Vietnam and Cambodia is barely a footnote in their thinking. If they do not see the results of totalitarianism night after night after night on television, it is as if such things did not exist. So this mindset does not recognize the hundreds of thousands and even millions of people slaughtered in Rwanda, Vietnam, Cambodia or Iraq. They are up in arms about a few thousand who die; but turn a blind eye to millions who are murdered under totalitarianism, principally for their thinking or their heritage.

⁸³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:24.

⁸⁴ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Judges 4:17–24.

These same people accuse George W. Bush of being a modern-day Hitler, yet do not recognize that the leaders of the aforementioned countries have much more in common with Hitler than George W. Bush. In making such comparisons, they reveal that they have absolutely no real concept of history; they know that Hitler was a bad person (they will not necessarily acknowledge that Stalin was even worse); and, in their thinking, President Bush is a bad person; therefore, they draw an analogy between the two men. I only wish that those who take these positions could spend some time, back in history, under the rulership of Hitler or Pol Pot or Ho Chi Minh; and find out what happens when they express a viewpoint which is in opposition to the state. These same people who compare our prison camps to the gulags need to spend time in each one, to see that their analogies are fundamentally inflammatory, and have no historical basis whatsoever.

Let's get back on track: unfortunately, the general cycle of victory → degeneracy → oppression → deliverance by God, would be repeated again and again. *Many times He would deliver them. They, however, were rebellious in their counsel and sank down in their iniquity. Nevertheless, He looked upon their distress when He heard their cry and He remembered His covenant for their sake and relented according to the greatness of His grace. Furthermore, He made them His compassion in the presence of all their captors* (Psalm 106:43–46).

This subject of this chapter will be continued in the next. Deborah and Barak will celebrate the victory of the Israelites in song, which I believe Deborah wrote.

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A Complete Translation of Judges 4	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
God Disciplines Israel using Jabin, the King of Canaan, and Sisera, his General	
<p>But the sons of Israel continued to do evil in the eyes of Y^ehowah; also [lit., and] Ehud died. Therefore, Y^ehowah sold them into the hand of Jabin, the king of Canaan who reigned in Razor. The commander of his army [was] Sisera, and he was dwelling in Harosheth-hagoiim [or, <i>Harosheth of the Gentiles</i>]. Then the sons of Israel cried unto Y^ehowah because he had 900 iron chariots [lit., <i>there were 900 chariots of iron to him</i>] and he, [even] he, oppressed the sons of Israel with violence [for] twenty years.</p>	<p>Still, the people of Israel continued to do evil in the eyes of Jehovah after Ehud died. Accordingly, Jehovah sold them into the hand of Jabin, the king of Canaan, who ruled from Hazor. The commander-in-chief of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth of the Gentiles. Then the sons of Israel cried out to Jehovah because he had 900 chariots of iron; and, furthermore, he oppressed them with violence for twenty years.</p>
Deborah, a Prophetess in Israel	
<p>Deborah—a woman, a prophetess, [and] the wife of Lappidoth—was judging [or, <i>governing</i>] Israel at that time. And she held court [lit., <i>was sitting</i>] under a palm of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el, in the hill country of Ephraim, and sons of Israel came to her for judgment.</p>	<p>During that time there was a woman, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, who judged over Israel. Deborah lived beneath a palm between Ramah and Beth-el in the hill country of Ephraim; and sons of Israel came to her for resolution of disputes and matters of judgment.</p>
Barak Comes to Deborah	

A Complete Translation of Judges 4

A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
<p>She summoned Barak, son of Abinoam from Kedesh-Naphtali, and said to him, “Has not Y^ehowah, God of Israel, commanded you, ‘Go and proceed to Mount Tabor and you will take with you 10,000 men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun. And I will lure [lit., <i>draw out</i>] Sisera, the general of the army of Jabin, to you, to the Kishon River. Furthermore, I will give his chariots and his troops into your hand.’ ”</p>	<p>And then she sent for and summoned Barak, the sons of Abinoam, from Kedesh-Naphtali. When he arrived, she said to him, “Didn’t Jehovah, the God of Israel, order you, ‘Go to Mount Tabor and gather 10,000 men from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, and take them with you. And I will lure Sisera, the general of the army of Jabin, along with his chariots and his troops, to the Kishon River to you, and I will give him into your hand.’ ”</p>
<p>Then Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, then I will go; and if you will not go with me, [then] I will not go; for I do not know the day in which the Lord will lead [me] by the Angel.” [The last portion of this verse is found in the LXX only].</p>	<p>Then Barak said to her, “If you go with me, then I’ll go; but if you don’t go with me, then I won’t go; because I do not know on which day the Angel of the Lord will lead me [into battle].” [The last portion of this verse is found in the LXX only].</p>
<p>Then she said, “I will definitely go with you. However, it will not be your glory on the way that you, [even] you are going; for, Yehowah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.”</p>	<p>So she answered, “I will consent to go with you; however, you will not be fully honored for your actions, as Jehovah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.”</p>
Deborah and Barak go up to Kedesh	
<p>Then Deborah arose and she went with Barak [to] Kedesh. Then Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali [to] Kedesh, so he went up [with] 10,000 men at his feet; and Deborah went up with him.</p>	<p>Then Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh. Barak assembled the sons of Zebulun and Naphtali in Kedesh. 10,000 men followed him and Deborah went with him as well.</p>
The Heber Interlude	
<p>Heber the Kenite was separated from the Kenites, from the sons of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses. He pitched his tent as far as the oak in Zaananim that [was near] Kedesh.</p>	<p>At this time, there was a Kenite named Heber who had separated himself from the other Kenites (the sons of Hobab, who was the father-in-law of Moses). He had pitched his tent near Kedesh by an oak in Zaananim.</p>
The Battle Between Sisera and Barak	
<p>Sisera was informed [lit, <i>then they made (it) known to Sisera</i>] that Barak ben Abinoam went up [to] Mount Tabor. Therefore, Sisera called all his chariots—nine hundred chariots of iron—and all the people who [were] with him from Harosheth-hagoiim to the brook Kishon.</p>	<p>Sisera had been informed that Barak, the son of Abinoam, had gone up to Mount Tabor. So Sisera summoned all of his 900 iron chariots along with all the soldiers who were with him from Harosheth-hagoiim and they gathered at the torrent Kishon.</p>
<p>Then Deborah said to Barak, “Rise up for this [is] the day [in] which Y^ehowah has given Sisera into your hand. Does not Y^ehowah go out before you?”</p>	<p>Then Deborah ordered Barak, “Now rise up and take a stand, for this is the day in which Jehovah has given Sisera into your hand. Hasn’t Jehovah already gone out before you?”</p>
<p>So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men following him. Y^ehowah routed Sisera and all of the chariots and all of the army with [lit., <i>by</i>] the edge of the sword before Barak.</p>	<p>So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men after him. Jehovah routed Sisera and his chariots and all of his armed forces with the edge of the sword before Barak.</p>

A Complete Translation of Judges 4

A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
Sisera then got down from [his] chariot and he fled on foot [lit., <i>by his feet</i>]. Barak continued to pursue after the chariots and after the army as far as Harosheth-hagoiim. And all of the army of Sisera fell by the mouth [or, <i>edge</i>] of the sword; not even one remained.	Then Sisera got out of his chariot and fled on foot. Barak continued to pursue the chariots and the army all the way to Harosheth-hagoiim. All of Sisera's army fell to the edge of the sword; Barak did not take any prisoners.
Sisera Flees to the Tent of Jael and Heber	
[Meanwhile] Sisera fled on foot [lit., <i>by his feet</i>] to the tent of Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite (for [there was] peace between Jabin, king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite). Jael came out to meet Sisera and she said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me. Don't be afraid."	Meanwhile, Sisera fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there was peace between Jabin, the king of Hazor, and the house of Heber the Kenite. Jael then came out of the tent and spoke with Sisera, saying, "Come into my tent, my lord, and rest here. Don't be afraid"
So he turned aside to her [and went into] the tent. She then covered him with a heavy blanket. He said to her, "Cause me to drink a little water, please, for I am thirsty." So she opened a skin container of milk and caused him to drink; and then she covered him.	So he went into the tent and she covered him with a heavy blanket. Then he said to her, "Give me a little water to drink, if you would, for I am quite thirsty." So Jael opened up a skin container of milk and gave him some milk to drink. Then she covered him.
He said to her, "Stand [at] the opening of the tent and it will be if a man comes and asks you, 'Is there here a man?'; you will say, 'No.' "	Then he said to her, "Stand at the tent door so that if anyone asks you, 'Is there a man in here?', you will say there isn't."
Jael Kills Sisera	
[Later on] Jael, the wife of Heber, took a tent spike and she took a hammer in her hand and went to him surreptitiously. She then drove the tent spike into his temple and it went down into the earth. He was sleeping and he was in a deep sleep and then he died.	After Sisera fell asleep, Jael, Heber's wife, then took a tent spike and a hammer and quietly approached him. Then she drove the tent spike into his temple all the way through. Sisera had been in a deep sleep and then died.
Barak Arrives at the Tent of Jael	
Meanwhile [lit., <i>and lo!</i>] Barak was [still] pursuing Sisera. So 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 into her [tent] and saw that [lit., <i>lo!</i>] Sisera was laying [on the ground] dying; the tent spike in his temple.	Finally, up came Barak, still in pursuit of Sisera. Jael went out and flagged him down, saying, "Come here and I will give to you the man you are seeking." So Barak went into her tent and saw Sisera laying there dying, with a tent spike in his temple.
Israel Defeats Jabin, King of Canaan	
So God subdued Jabin, king of Canaan, in that day before the face of the sons of Israel. So the severe [or, intense] hand of the sons of Israel continued going against Jabin, the king of Canaan, until they caused Jabin, king of Canaan, to be destroyed.	Thus, God subdued Jabin, the king of Canaan, before Israel in that day. Israel continued their battle momentum against Jabin and brought him down as well.

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