

Adult Bible Class

The Book of Joshua - Lesson 7 - Chps. 11-12

The Book of Joshua So Far

Thus far in the book of Joshua we have seen:

God commissions Joshua to lead the Israelites after the death of Moses (chp. 1).

Joshua prepares the people to cross the Jordan River.

Joshua sends two spies to view the land - especially Jericho (chp. 2).

The spies are saved by Rahab the harlot.

The people cross Jordan on dry ground as God causes the river water to stand in a heap (chp. 3).

The people set up two memorials from stones taken from the middle of the Jordan riverbed (chp. 4).

The generation that was born in the wilderness is circumcised (chp. 5).

The Lord appears to Joshua as "Commander of the hosts."

The people march around Jericho as commanded for seven days and the walls fall down when they shout. Rahab and her family are spared. (chp. 6).

The Israelites are defeated at Ai because of one man's sin - Achan (chp. 7).

It is revealed that Achan sinned, and he and all that are his are destroyed.

The city of Ai is finally conquered after things are made right (chp. 8).

The people renew their covenant with God at Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, with Joshua reading the blessings and curses of the law.

The Gibeonites deceive Israel, and Israel makes a covenant with them (chp. 9).

Joshua leads the battle against the Amorite nations to save the Gibeonites and a great miracle takes place - the sun stands still until the battle is won (chp. 10).

The leaders of Israel put their feet on the necks of the Amorite kings.

Joshua conquers the southern portion of Canaan.

Joshua Chapter 11

Israel Defeats the Northern Armies

Joshua 11:1 (NLT) When King Jabin of Hazor heard what had happened, he sent messages to the following kings: King Jobab of Madon; the king of Shimron; the king of Acshaph; **2** all the kings of the northern hill country; the kings in the Jordan Valley south of Galilee; the kings in the Galilean foothills; the kings of Naphoth-dor on the west; **3** the kings of Canaan, both east and west; the kings of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites in the hill country, and the Hivites in the towns on the slopes of Mount Hermon in the land of Mizpah.

Joshua 11:4 All these kings came out to fight. Their combined armies formed a vast horde. And with all their horses and chariots, they covered the landscape like the sand on the seashore. **5** The kings joined forces and established their camp around the water near Merom to fight against Israel.

6 Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them. By this time tomorrow I will hand all of them over to Israel as dead men. Then you must cripple their horses and burn their chariots."

Joshua 11:7 So Joshua and all his fighting men traveled to the water near Merom and attacked suddenly. **8** And the Lord gave them victory over their enemies. The Israelites chased them as far as Greater Sidon and Misrephoth-maim, and eastward into the valley of Mizpah, until not one enemy warrior was left alive. **9** Then Joshua crippled the horses and burned all the chariots, as the Lord had instructed.

These kings in the northern part of Canaan had chariots and were more advanced than the southern kings. To face chariots in battle was a very serious thing indeed.

Joshua fought and fought, winning the victory over every king. When he faced the chariots of the north, he still won. Though the enemy was more advanced, yet Joshua was still victorious.

10 Joshua then turned back and captured Hazor and killed its king. (Hazor had at one time been the capital of all these kingdoms.) **11** The Israelites completely destroyed every living thing in the city, leaving no survivors. Not a single person was spared. And then Joshua burned the city.

12 Joshua slaughtered all the other kings and their people, completely destroying them, just as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded. **13** But the Israelites did not burn any of the towns built on mounds except Hazor, which Joshua burned. **14** And the Israelites took all the plunder and livestock of the ravaged towns for themselves. But they killed all the people, leaving no survivors. **15** As the Lord had commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua. And Joshua did as he was told, carefully obeying all the commands that the Lord had given to Moses.

Joshua is a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ who completely won the victory for us at Calvary. Jesus left nothing undone.

Summary of Joshua's Conquests

16 So Joshua conquered the entire region—the hill country, the entire Negev, the whole area around the town of Goshen, the western foothills, the Jordan Valley, the mountains of Israel, and the Galilean foothills. **17** The Israelite territory now extended all the way from Mount Halak, which leads up to Seir in the south, as far north as Baal-gad at the foot of Mount Hermon in the valley of Lebanon. Joshua killed all the kings of those territories, **18** waging war for a long time to accomplish this. **19** No one in this region made peace with the Israelites except the Hivites of Gibeon. All the others were defeated. **20** For the Lord hardened their hearts and caused them to fight the Israelites. So they were completely destroyed without mercy, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

Occasionally in Scripture we read that the Lord “*hardened their hearts*” unto their destruction. This happened in Egypt to Pharaoh when he had been given time to repent yet continually refused God. When God’s patience and kindness does not soften the heart of the sinner, then the Lord can use him as an example to others of the deceitfulness of sin. At least this person can be an example of the destructive power of sin. The Old Testament stories teach us how bad sin is, how much God hates sin, and how much destruction sin leaves in its wake. If we think about it, a loving God will not allow sin to go on and on and on.

21 During this period Joshua destroyed all the descendants of Anak, who lived in the hill country of Hebron, Debir, Anab, and the entire hill country of Judah and Israel. He killed them all and completely destroyed their towns. **22** None of the descendants of Anak were left in all the land of Israel, though some still remained in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

Joshua 11:23 So Joshua took control of the entire land, just as the Lord had instructed Moses. He gave it to the people of Israel as their special possession, dividing the land among the tribes. So the land finally had rest from war.

The Anakim (descendants of Anak) were a giant people. Beside “Anakim,” other names in Scripture for giants are “Emim,” “Zamzummim,” and the “Rephaim.” These giants had been the terror of Israel. In the evil report of the unfaithful spies, giants are mentioned as a major reason why they could not take the land. The dread of them was one reason Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years.

We read here in a simple sentence that Joshua utterly destroyed them. Some did remain in the land of the Philistines, and the shepherd boy David would face Goliath of Gath in a future battle. However, the worst part of the giants was the terror they could inspire. The great power of the giants was over their imaginations.

In our lives, some enemies and problems overpower us by affecting our minds. Some of the worst ills are those that never happen - except in our minds. They scare us, frighten us, and take away our joy and victory. When Israel believed God’s word that He would fight for them and with them, they were well able to defeat any enemy. They were well able to possess the land.

Joshua Chapter 12

In chapter 12, the author sums up the conquests made by the Israelites both by Moses on the east side of the Jordan and Joshua on the west side of the Jordan.

The Bible is a book that urges us to look both to the past and to the future. We should review the past so that we never forget the victories of days gone by. We should also look ahead (and God gives wonderful prophecies and promises) to a glorious future through faith and obedience. Looking back and looking ahead are both vitally important.

The Kings Conquered by Moses

Joshua 12:1 (NLT) These are the kings east of the Jordan River who had been killed by the Israelites and whose land was taken. Their territory extended from the Arnon Gorge to Mount Hermon and included all the land east of the Jordan Valley.

2 King Sihon of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, was defeated. His kingdom included Aroer, on the edge of the Arnon Gorge, and extended from the middle of the Arnon Gorge to the Jabbok River, which serves as a border for the Ammonites. This territory included the southern half of the territory of Gilead. **3** Sihon also controlled the Jordan Valley and regions to the east—from as far north as the Sea of Galilee to as far south as the Dead Sea, including the road to Beth-jeshimoth and southward to the slopes of Pisgah.

The whole country on the east of Jordan, from the Arnon to the Jabbok, was possessed by the Amorites, whose king, Sihon, refused to permit the Israelites to pass through his territory, and put his army in array against them. The Israelites went forth against him to battle, and gained a complete victory. The Amorites were defeated; Sihon, his sons, and all his people were smitten with the sword, his walled towns were captured, and the entire country of the Amorites became the possession of the Israelites.

MAP OF CANAAN - TWELVE TRIBE PORTIONS



Numbers 21:21 Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, **22** "Let me pass through your land. We will not turn aside into fields or vineyards; we will not drink water from wells. We will go by the King's Highway until we have passed through your territory." **23** But Sihon would not allow Israel to pass through his territory. So Sihon gathered all his people together and went out against Israel in the wilderness. . .and fought against Israel. **24** Then Israel defeated him with the edge of the sword, and took possession of his land . . .

Deuteronomy 2:31 "And the Lord said to me, 'See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to possess *it*, that you may inherit his land.'

Joshua 12:4 *The other king was Og king of Bashan and his territory, who was of the remnant of the giants, who dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, **5** and reigned over Mount Hermon, over Salcah, over all Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and over half of Gilead to the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.*

6 These Moses the servant of the Lord and the children of Israel had conquered; and Moses the servant of the Lord had given it as a possession to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

The country from the Jabbok to Hermon was at this time ruled by Og, the last of the Rephaim (a giant people). He also tried to prevent the progress of the Israelites, but was utterly routed, and all his cities and territory fell into the hands of the Israelites.

Deuteronomy 3:1 "Then we turned and went up the road to Bashan; and Og king of Bashan came out against us. . . **2** And the Lord said to me [Moses], 'Do not fear him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand; you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.'

3 "So the Lord our God also delivered into our hands Og king of Bashan. . .sixty cities . . . **5** All these cities *were* fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, besides a great many rural towns. **6** And we utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon . . .

8 "And at that time we took the land from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who *were* on this side of the Jordan, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon . . .

The land east of the Jordan taken from King Sihon and King Og was given to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. Sihon and Og were mighty kings and their armies were strong and terrible. It is very likely that the Israelites were, humanly speaking, not strong enough to defeat the forces of Sihon and Og. The Israelites won because the Lord was with them. Their victory over Sihon and Og is referenced further in the book of Joshua, when Rahab of Jericho tells the spies that her people had heard of the Israelites' victory over Sihon and Og and were therefore afraid to come against them in battle.

Joshua 2:9 and said to the men: "I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. **10** For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who *were* on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. **11** And as soon as we heard *these things*, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He *is* God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

Israel's miraculous victory over the Amorites is mentioned in the Psalms as well.

Psalms 135:5 For I know that the Lord *is* great,
And our Lord *is* above all gods . . .

8 He destroyed the firstborn of Egypt,
Both of man and beast.

9 He sent signs and wonders into the midst of you, O Egypt,
Upon Pharaoh and all his servants.

10 He defeated many nations
And slew mighty kings—

11 Sihon king of the Amorites,
Og king of Bashan,
And all the kingdoms of Canaan—
12 And gave their land as a heritage,
A heritage to Israel His people.

These two victories gave the Israelites possession of the country on the east of Jordan, from the Arnon to the foot of Mount Hermon. The kingdom of Sihon embraced about 1,500 square miles, while that of Og was more than 3,000 square miles.

No king, no army, no political system was enough to destroy God's people. God had promised the land to them as an inheritance, and God was going to see to it that they possessed it.

The Conquest and Archaeology

The Amarna Letters are an important archaeological discovery. The letters are correspondence primarily between Egypt and Canaan (as well as other neighboring kingdoms) during the time of the conquest of Canaan. The letters were written on about 400 clay tablets and were written in the Akkadian language in cuneiform writing. They were first discovered about 1887 by local Egyptians, then once they were recognized, archaeologists recovered more of them from the ruins of the Bureau of Correspondence of Pharaoh in the ruined city of Amarna. Today the clay tablets are in various museums around the world.

Some of the letters contain the first mention of a group known as the *Habiru*, who many Bible scholars connect with the "Hebrews."

The following are some translations from several of the Amarna Letters:

"From Rib-Hadda, mayor of Byblos (Geba): King of all countries, Great King Pharaoh: The war of the Habiru forces is extremely severe. Do not neglect Sumur lest all be joined to the Habiru."

Amarna Tablet EA68

"From Zimreddi, mayor of Sidon, to Pharaoh: The war against me is very severe. All the cities that the king put in my charge have been joined to the Habiru."

Amarna Tablet EA144

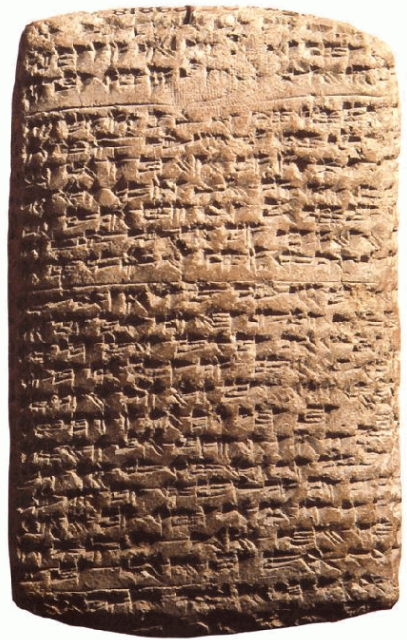
"Message of Abdi-Tirsi, the king of Hazor, to Pharaoh: I am guarding Hazor and its villages for Pharaoh. Remember the harm already done [by Joshua] to Hazor and against me." Amarna Tablet EA228

"From Biridija, mayor of Megiddo: I am guarding Megiddo, the city of Pharaoh, day and night, as the warring of the Habiru in the land is severe." Amarna EA243

"From Yapahu, mayor of Gezer, to Pharaoh - my god, my Sun, the Sun from the sky: The Habiru are stronger than we, send help and save me from the Habiru lest the Habiru destroy us." Amarna Tablet EA299

“From Abdi-Heba, mayor of Jerusalem, to King Pharaoh: They are now attempting to take Jerusalem. Pharaoh has placed his name in Jerusalem forever. He cannot abandon the land of Jerusalem. Gezer, Ashkelon, and Lachish have given oil, food and supplies to the Habiru.” Amarna Tablet EA287

“From Abdi-Heba, mayor of Jerusalem, to king Pharaoh: The Habiru have taken all the cities. Not a single mayor remains. Turbazu and Yaptih-Hadda were slain in the city gate of Silu (Shiloh). Habiru killed Zimredda of Lachish. The king did nothing. Why?” Amarna Tablet EA288



Habiru - Hebrew

The etymology of *Hebrew* is “one who wanders” like a wanderer or bedouin. This is exactly what the word *Habiru* means in the Amarna Tablets. The first time the word Hebrew is used in Scripture is when it is applied to “Abraham the Hebrew” in Genesis 14:13.

The Amarna Letters are an incredible witness to the conquest of the Promised Land under Joshua - a gift God has given through archaeology in these last days.

Joshua Chapter 12 Continued

Kings Defeated West of the Jordan

Joshua 12:7 (NLT) The following is a list of the kings that Joshua and the Israelite armies defeated on the west side of the Jordan, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, which leads up to Seir. (Joshua gave this land to the tribes of Israel as their possession, **8** including the hill country, the western foothills, the Jordan Valley, the mountain slopes, the Judean wilderness, and the Negev. The people who lived in this region were the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.)

The land of Canaan was a pleasant land of mountains and valleys, deserts, wilderness, forests, and springs. Seven nations had been in possession of this land of Canaan, and they are all mentioned in Deuteronomy 7:1. Here, in the above list, only six are mentioned. Perhaps the Gergashites (mentioned in Deuteronomy) were incorporated into another nation by this time.

These are the kings Israel defeated:

- 9** The king of Jericho
- The king of Ai, near Bethel
- 10** The king of Jerusalem
- The king of Hebron
- 11** The king of Jarmuth

The king of Lachish
12 The king of Eglon
 The king of Gezer
13 The king of Debir
 The king of Geder
14 The king of Hormah
 The king of Arad
15 The king of Libnah
 The king of Adullam
16 The king of Makkedah
 The king of Bethel
17 The king of Tappuah
 The king of Hephher
18 The king of Aphek
 The king of Lasharon
19 The king of Madon
 The king of Hazor
20 The king of Shimron-meron
 The king of Acshaph
21 The king of Taanach
 The king of Megiddo
22 The king of Kedesh
 The king of Jokneam in Carmel
23 The king of Dor in the town of Naphoth-dor
 The king of Goyim in Gilgal
24 The king of Tirzah.
 In all, thirty-one kings were defeated.

This list must be in the order of the conquests of Joshua, since it begins with Jericho.

An Inheritance

The land of Canaan is Israel's inheritance (or portion, or heritage).

Numbers 26:1 (NKJV) And it came to pass . . . that the Lord spoke to Moses . . . saying: **2** "Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel from twenty years old and above . . . all who are able to go to war in Israel." . . . **51** These *are* those who were numbered of the children of Israel: six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty . . . **53** "To these the land shall be divided as an inheritance, according to the number of names. **54** To a large *tribe* you shall give a larger inheritance, and to a small *tribe* you shall give a smaller inheritance . . . **55** But the land shall be divided by lot; they shall inherit according to the names of the tribes of their fathers. **56** According to the lot their inheritance shall be divided between the larger and the smaller."

Exodus 6:8 And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I *am* the Lord.

The land was first promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, even though they were sojourners or travelers in it during their lifetimes. Remember, God said to Abraham:

Genesis 15:7 . . . "I *am* the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it." . . . **18** On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— **19** the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, **20** the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, **21** the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

An inheritance may be very great, but until a person takes possession of it, it is only something to dream about and hope for.

In Scripture, Christians have an inheritance - eternal life in heaven.

1 Peter 1:3 (NIV) Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, **5** who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Ephesians 1:13 (NKJV) In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, **14** who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

John 10:28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. **29** My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand. **30** I and My Father are one."

The psalmist speaks of the Lord as his inheritance or portion:

Psalms 119:57 (NIV) You are my portion, O Lord . . .

Psalms 16:5 (NKJV) O Lord, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup;
You maintain my lot.

6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant *places*;
Yes, I have a good inheritance.

Jeremiah wrote:

Lamentations 3:24 (NKJV) "The Lord *is* my portion," says my soul,
"Therefore I hope in Him!"

The Canaanites had been judged by God to be exceedingly wicked, sinning continually. God used the Israelites to judge them when he told His people to completely destroy the people of Canaan.

When we read the exploits of the Israelites, we read that those that opposed Israel and fought against them were utterly defeated and destroyed. Those that humbled themselves and feared the God of Israel were spared (Rahab and her family and the Gibeonites).

It didn't matter that some of the cities destroyed by Joshua had holy names and histories. Jerusalem was the town of ancient Melchizedek, priest and king of Salem to whom Abraham paid tithes. *Bethel* means "house of God," and Jacob met God there. But these cities with their great histories went up in flames like all the others. A name would not save them, because the inhabitants had become so very wicked. God was against them, and He determined to give this land to the Israelites as an inheritance - and Himself to the Israelites as their God.

So what is the message for us today? The possessing of the land of Canaan is a picture to us of victorious Christian living. It represents all the benefits that come from salvation and living victoriously in Jesus Christ. The battleground for the

Israelites was a physical battleground. The battleground for Christians today is in our hearts and minds. Their weapons were swords and spears. Our weapons are spiritual weapons of faith, obedience, prayer, perseverance, worship, the Word, and fellowship. Israel's enemy was sinful, ungodly, unrepentant nations. Our enemy is the devil and sin in our lives. God wants us to have the land with its variety of terrain, but we must completely destroy sin and ungodliness in our lives. If sin is allowed to live, it will eventually turn against us and rule us without mercy. Therefore, we must show sin no mercy, and we must slay it. The only way we can possess the land is to fight for it.

Surely not every single Canaanite person was a bad person! So why did they all have to be destroyed? They were aligned with a people that God was against! Only Rahab and the Gibeonites had the desire to come out of them! We must be on the right side! We must be on the Lord's side.