

Joshua 11-12 - Thursday, May 24th, 2012

Joshua 11:1 And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor heard *these things*, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Achshaph, (2) and to the kings who *were* from the north, in the mountains, in the plain south of Chinneroth, in the lowland, and in the heights of Dor on the west, (3) to the Canaanites in the east and in the west, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite in the mountains, and the Hivite below Hermon in the land of Mizpah. (4) So they went out, they and all their armies with them, *as* many people *as* the sand that *is* on the seashore in multitude, with very many horses and chariots. (5) And when all these kings had met together, they came and camped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel. (6) But the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow about this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire."

- There are several things here in the first six verses that I'd like to point out, the first of which is that the Israelites go from one battle to the next.
- Not only is their entrance in, and taking possession of, the Promised Land riddled with battle, it seems the battles are getting even more intense.
- In chapter 10 we had an alliance of five nations from the south and here in chapter 11 we have another alliance of nations this time from the north.

- The second thing I would like to point out is how that these kings of the North had caught wind of the Israelites victory over the kings of the south.
- I believe that this speaks to how it is with the battles of the Christian life, in that our victories in battle arouse the interest of our enemy, the Devil.
- As the Israelites were a threat to the northern kings after their victory over the southern kings, so to are we a threat to the kingdom of darkness.

- The third thing I would like to point out is how formidable a foe this northern alliance was to God's people. This was a massive military force.
- The reason it's important to note this is because God had already gone before them and prepared them for that which was prepared for them.
- Namely, an insurmountable and undefeatable coalition of nations that was coming against them, and it came vis-à-vis, Jericho, Ai, and the South.

- That's not to say that there was the absence of trepidation, and intimidation, however, any fear was likely squelched by the assurance of victory.
- In other words, God had promised them, and assured them that by the same time the next day, He would deliver all of them slain before Israel.
- The reason I'm point this out is that this is the antidote for fear in the life of a believer. The victory is already mine, as the enemy is a defeated foe.

F.B. Meyer in his commentary on Joshua writes; Josephus tells us that the united forces consisted of 300,000 foot, 100,000 horses, and 20,000 chariots. He says also that the Israelites were terrified at having to encounter the iron chariots which drove swiftly into the ranks of an opposing army, enabling the warriors to discharge their missiles with terrible effect. It may be that some tidings of the immense array that lay waiting for him within the circle of the hills reached Joshua when he was within a day's march of the camp. A sense of the awfulness of the crisis may for a moment have thrilled his soul; but the steadfastness of his courage knew no shock, because, simultaneously with the tidings, there came the divine assurance, "Be not afraid because of them; for to-morrow about this time I will deliver them up all slain before Israel."

(7) So Joshua and all the people of war with him came against them suddenly by the waters of Merom, and they attacked them. (8) And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who defeated them and chased them to Greater Sidon, to the Brook Misrephoth, and to the Valley of Mizpah eastward; they attacked them until they left none of them remaining. (9) So Joshua did to them as the LORD had told him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

- Verses 7-9 bring up an important question, and it's one for which we would do well to answer and learn from as well, in our own Christian walk.
- Here's the question, why wouldn't God let them keep all the horses and chariots? Answer, He did not want them trusting in or relying upon them.
- This is one of those passages that reminds me of how God knows me, and what's in my heart. He knows that I'm prone to trust in those things.

Psalms 20:7 NIV Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

2 Chronicles 16:7-10 NKJV (7) And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him: "Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand. (8) Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand. (9) For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those* whose heart *is* loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars." (10) Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in prison, for *he was* enraged at him because of this. And Asa oppressed *some* of the people at that time.

(10) Joshua turned back at that time and took Hazor, and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor was formerly the head of all those kingdoms. (11) And they struck all the people who *were* in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying *them*. There was none left breathing. Then he burned Hazor with fire. (12) So all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua took and struck with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded. (13) But *as for* the cities that stood on their mounds, Israel burned none of them, except Hazor only, *which* Joshua burned. (14) And all the spoil of these cities and the livestock, the children of Israel took as booty for themselves; but they struck every man with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them, and they left none breathing. (15) As the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses. (16) Thus Joshua took all this land: the mountain country, all the South, all the land of Goshen, the lowland, and the Jordan plain—the mountains of Israel and its lowlands, (17) from Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, even as far as Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings, and struck them down and killed them. (18) Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.

- Notice here in verse 18, the Holy Spirit deemed it necessary to include in the narrative how that Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.
- Why? Why does the Holy Spirit want us to know this? I'm of the belief that the answer to this question is twofold and profound in its application.
- Here's what I'm thinking, simply put, the Holy Spirit is teaching us about integrity and longevity, and He's doing it vis-à-vis the person of Joshua.

- Here's how I get there, first, Joshua's integrity, even after the victory Joshua has the integrity to follow through and do what God told Him to do.
- I'm learning that God won't give me the next thing to do until I've been faithful and had the integrity to do that which He had already told me to do.
- Actually, it's not that God won't, it's more that God can't, were He to do so, He would in effect become party to and complicit in my disobedience.

Proverbs 11:3 NIV The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.

- Secondly, Joshua's longevity. This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is, we tend to lose track of scriptural timeframes.
- What I mean by that is, we read and study a chapter like the one before us, and we lose track of time not realizing how long the record really took.
- As far as we know Joshua could have defeated this kings in a matter of hours or days, or extended days like the long day of Joshua in chapter 10.

- I say that to say this, often times we don't appreciate the longevity of the men and women of God, who walked with God for a long period of time.
- Especially in this day and age when we want everything now, so just put what I need to learn in the microwave and heat it up so I can eat it up.
- The bottom line is it just doesn't work that way. If the truth be known spiritual maturity and longevity comes by way of a crock pot not a microwave.

(19) There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All *the others* they took in battle. (20) For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, *and* that they might receive no mercy, but that He might destroy them, as the LORD had commanded Moses. (21) And at that time Joshua came and cut off the Anakim from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. (22) None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod. (23) So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Then the land rested from war.

- This is another one of those places in God's Word where it can be perceived that God is being unfair in how He hardens the hearts of the enemy.
- It's vital we know their hearts were already hardened. God is only confirming what's already come to pass in that their mind is already made up.
- Furthermore, God in his grace gave the Amorites 400 years to repent. As one so aptly put it, "God's grace either hardens or softens ones heart."

Joshua 12:1 These *are* the kings of the land whom the children of Israel defeated, and whose land they possessed on the other side of the Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon, and all the eastern Jordan plain: (2) One king was Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon *and* ruled half of Gilead, from Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon, from the middle of that river, even as far as the River Jabbok, *which is* the border of the Ammonites, (3) and the eastern Jordan plain from the Sea of Chinneroth as far as the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea), the road to Beth Jeshimoth, and southward below the slopes of Pisgah. (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. (7) And these *are* the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel conquered on this side of the Jordan, on the west, from Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon as far as Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, which Joshua gave to the tribes of Israel *as* a possession according to their divisions, (8) in the mountain country, in the lowlands, in the *Jordan* plain, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the South—the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: (9) the king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which *is* beside Bethel, one; (10) the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; (11) the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; (12) the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; (13) the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; (14) the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; (15) the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; (16) the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; (17) the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hopher, one; (18) the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; (19) the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; (20) the king of Shimron Meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; (21) the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; (22) the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam in Carmel, one; (23) the king of Dor in the heights of Dor, one; the king of the people of Gilgal, one; (24) the king of Tirzah, one—all the kings, thirty-one.

- Here again we have recorded what is arguably nebulous and even mundane detail, and there's even an entire chapter devoted to this record.
- Why? Why does the Holy Spirit deem it necessary for us to know about all these kings where they were from and even that there was 31 in total?
- I don't have the foggiest idea so let's close in prayer! Seriously though who among us has one verse in Joshua 12 as a life verse on our fridge?

I like how one commentator asks then answers the same questions? Why do we have such an exhaustive, and seemingly tedious list? It only seems tedious to us because we do not live in the land. For those who really had their inheritance there, these were essential matters that touched every day life, answering the question: "What land belongs to Israel? ... These descriptions are also important because they make it clear that these things happened in real time, and in real space. These are not fairy tales that begin with "once upon a time," this is history that begins with specific places and people and rulers."

- Keenly aware that we just covered an entire chapter in the span of a few minutes, I have one final thought before we bring our study to a close.
- Here's what I'm thinking, chapter twelve is lesson in the importance of listing and remembering all the victories that were wrought by God's grace.
- We do well to recall those prior victories that we might take heart in present or future battles, as God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Alan Redpath - "Sometimes in the course of human experience it is good to sit down and reflect on what has been conquered by the grace of God."