

Joshua
Already, But Not Yet
Joshua 10:16-13:7

Up to the middle of **Joshua 10**, the story of Israel's conquest of Canaan is told in detail. Going forward, the biblical writer gives quick summaries that led the advancing Jewish armies, first south and then north, throughout the land.

Basically, there were three phases to Israel's conquest of the Promised Land.

The 1st phase was crossing of the Jordan River, the miraculous victory over Jericho, the smoke-and-mirrors victory over Ai, and the peace treaty with Gibeon. This established Israel in the land and divided Canaan like a wedge.

The 2nd phase (**Joshua 10**) moved south of the wedge.

The 3rd phase (**Joshua 11**) moved to the northern region.

Joshua 12 provides a summary of the entire campaign, including a list of the defeated kings.

The progressive overthrow of Canaan took seven years! (cf. **Deuteronomy 7:22-23** - *little by little, not all at once*)

Joshua 13:1-7 lists the areas of Canaan yet to be conquered.

Joshua conquered more kings than he did strongholds. Although Joshua's conquest set the stage for Israel's complete control of the entire land, there was much fighting yet to be done for Israel to fully possess all that God promised them.

Joshua 1:1–13:7 reveals how Israel gained general control of the general land-mass God promised to Abraham. But again, there was yet much work to be done for Israel to gain full control of their full inheritance.

The Southern Campaign

After destroying the five kings and their armies, Joshua turned his attention to the strongholds of southern Canaan—Makedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir.

Jerusalem was not taken until the time of David, hundreds of years later (**2 Samuel 5:6–7**).

The Philistines on the coastal plain, what we know today as the Gaza Strip, never was controlled by Israel, even in the glory days of David and Solomon, although Yahweh assured Israel he would give them into their hands. Israel's faith failed at this point.

Joshua 10:41–42 *Joshua subdued them from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza and from the whole region of Goshen to Gibeon. All these kings and their lands Joshua conquered in one campaign, because Yahweh, the God of Israel, fought for Israel.*

The Northern Campaign

The king of Hazor was alarmed at Israel's victories in the south, but instead of humbling himself before the living God, like Rahab and the Gibeonites, he followed the same foolish course of action as the southern coalition. He called the kings and armies of several northern cities together and joined forces near the Waters of Merom, a lake a little north of the Sea of Galilee.

The new element in this battle was the use of chariots. This was Israel's opportunity to see that the great chariot army of the Philistines on the coastal plain was nothing to fear, because, once again, God intervened and promised Joshua success.

Joshua 11:6 *Do not be afraid of them, because by this time tomorrow I will hand all of them over to Israel, slain. You are to hamstring their horses and burn their chariots.*

To hamstring a horse meant to sever the large tendon at the back of the knee on the hind legs which rendered it incapable of further military use. God wanted to prevent Israel from relying on their own military strength and prowess. Without horses and chariots for future battles, Israel would learn to live by faith by depending on Yahweh and give him credit alone for their success in combat.

Psalm 20:7 *Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of Yahweh our Elohim.*

Joshua 11:8–9 Yahweh gave them into the hands of Israel and they pursued the enemy all the way to Greater Sidon, Misrephoth-maim, and the Valley of Mizpah on the east, until no survivors were left.

The initial conquest story ends with **chapter 11**, so it is appropriate that **chapter 12** provides a summary.

13:1-7 The biblical writer lists the strongholds yet unconquered by Israel (including the Jebusites of Jerusalem and the Philistines on the coastal plain). So, Joshua begins to divide up the land, by lot, to the 9 ½ tribes of Israel on the west side of the Jordan, even before some of it was not yet fully subdued.

Joshua 17:17-18 Joshua chides certain tribes for failing to fully subdue their inherited territory. Pockets of resistance remained and they needed to be rooted out for Israel to fully possess their inheritance from God. They were allowing the Canaanites to remain in the land, to occupy what was rightfully theirs!

Correlation to Our Salvation Experience

Joshua leads Israel into their inheritance and gains for them *"the entire land"* and yet, there remained strongholds in the land not yet subdued. That is a picture of our salvation.

In his victory over sin, death and the devil, our Joshua, our Yeshua, the Lord Jesus Christ, gained our full inheritance from God, but we do not enter into its fullness experientially all at once. Just like Israel of old, we live in an already-but-not-yet situation.

Like Joshua's initial conquest, Jesus, in his first coming, established his kingdom (his rule) over sin, death, and the devil, but he only inaugurated that rule on earth. Like Canaan of old, spiritual strongholds remain in this world and in the lives of God's people. The world and its system are still in open rebellion against God. The devil,

though utterly routed at the cross of Christ, is not fully defanged. He still has his lying voice and he still roams about seeking whom he may devour. His doom is sure, but it's not yet fully enforced. Our own depravity—our fallen nature, our flesh—also remains in us, although we have been fully redeemed and forgiven. We have a new heart, a regenerated spirit and we are indwelt by the Spirit of the living God as a down payment of our full inheritance, reserved in heaven for us, but we remain a mixed bag on earth. Our flesh wars against the Spirit and the Spirit against our flesh.

So, just as Israel of old, though our inheritance “is fully taken,” there is work yet to be done, and we live in the same tension of the *already, not yet*. Like Israel, God has determined to lead us into possessing our inheritance little-by-little.

Hebrews 10:14 *By one sacrifice, Jesus perfected forever, those who are being made holy!*

2 Corinthians 3:18 *We are being transformed from glory to glory into the image of Christ by the power of the Spirit.*

Philippians 3:10-14 *Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Like Israel of old, God wants to grow us up into our inheritance little-by-little, because he wants us to learn how to live by faith and not by sight. There is something about the development of our faith in a life of obedience, here and now, that is preparing us for the life to come in the new heavens and earth.

We are living in the last days. The King has come, his kingdom is already here, the New Covenant is in operation...**but only in part.**

Through faith in Christ, we have escaped *sin's punishment*. We have forgiveness of sin, eternal life, a new, regenerated heart, the indwelling Spirit and grace gifts to serve the King. But we do not yet experience the full benefits of these blessings in full.

When the fullness comes, death will be abolished. Our fallen nature will be eradicated from our body. We will have new, fantastically powerful bodies that defy the laws of nature as we know them, and we will forever be free from *sin's power and presence*. We will experience moral perfection in Christ, even while knowing good from evil, just like God. God will turn the lie of Satan to Eve in the garden of Eden into a glorious truth!

But, for now, we are still in the “not-yet”. That's why we continue to struggle with sin, inside us and outside us. That's why people can still rebel against King Jesus and persecute his people and do all kinds of evil and appear to be getting away with it. That's why the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. That's why the devil is still on the loose. That's why success and greatness in this world are still measured by power, wealth, fame, and beauty, and not so much by the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

But when King Jesus returns and the fullness comes, all that will change, and the consummation of the ages will come to pass. Until then, we live in the in-between times, between two realities—*already, but not yet*.

So, as Joshua of old, our Joshua, our Yeshua calls us to join him in bringing down the spiritual strongholds in our community and in our lives—to become who we already are in him.

So, don't lose heart as you struggle with sin. You're supposed to! It's supposed to be hard. There's work yet to do, work that God is not going to do for us, but rather he wants to do *with* us. It's part of our transformation process to be more like Jesus.

So, don't let failure defeat you; get back up! Yahweh your Elohim is for you, not against you. Yes, he may discipline us, but it's because he loves us like a good, good father.

For us, failure is the backdoor to success.

That's why Joshua didn't allow failure to defeat him. Joshua recognized his failure as a learning opportunity, and put it behind him, as Paul did in **Philippians 3**.

Joshua was a great leader, but he wasn't perfect. But God used him anyway! Why?

Joshua believed God.

R. C. Sproul: *There is a great difference between believing in God and believing God.*

Joshua believed God and acted on that belief. Real faith, like real love, shows up in what we do and how and why we do it. When it comes to believing and loving God, it shows up in how and why we obey him.

Joshua obeyed God.

11:15: *“As Yahweh commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua, and Joshua did it; he left nothing undone of all that Yahweh commanded Moses.”*

Joshua persevered with God

Joshua lived a *long obedience in the same direction*. His consistency and his tenacity are what we need in living the Christian life today.

The spiritual disciplines of studying and applying God's word, prayer, corporate worship, fellowship/practicing community with God's people, serving others with the grace gifts God invests in us and bearing witness to lost people, are all a part of what **Hebrews 6:1** means when it says, “*Press on to maturity!*”

It is a life-long process of continuing to bring down spiritual strongholds of sin in our lives as God's holy people. Our weapons must be spiritual, not political horses and chariots! Spiritual work must be done through spiritual means.

In Christ, the victory is won, but there's a lot of work yet to be done to possess the benefits of that victory in this life.

So, let's get to work!