

Joshua 11

Taking the Land

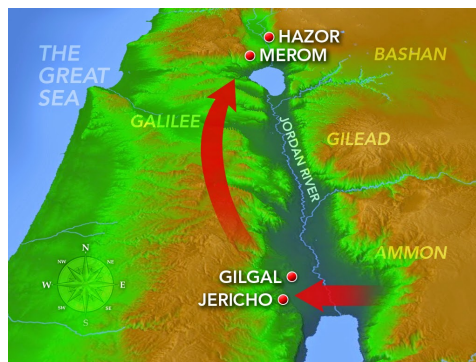
The book of Joshua records the details of Israel occupying the Promised Land. In doing so the book also serves as an illustration of how the Lord works through a congregation and in the life of a believer.

Joshua 11 - The Northern Conquest

Joshua 11:1-3

*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.*

Upon hearing about the victories of Israel and the treaty of Gibeon Jabin King of Hazor drafted an allegiance with several city-states in the north of Israel. Their intent was to combine forces and defeat Israel.



Hazor was the largest and most fortified city in Canaan. It was situated in the far north just above the Sea of Galilee along the trade route heading north into Syria and Babylon.

Remains of Hazor were discovered in the 1950's
Archeologists uncovered an upper city roughly 30 acres in size and a lower city roughly 175 acres.
The remains show a vast and powerful ancient city

Joshua tells us that Hazor had developed a mini empire and ruled over that northern region of Canaan

Joshua 11:10

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.

Joshua 11:4-5

*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**.*

This coalition formed a massive army.

Joshua describes it as, “*As many people as the sand that is on the seashore in multitude.*” This is clearly a figure of speech. It carries the idea of simply being beyond counting. If someone asked you to count and you knew it was just too many to count.

This massive army was also well prepared

“With very many horses and chariots”

Horses and chariots were the tanks of the ancient world.

With a horse a person could attack swiftly

NFL Lineman weighs on average 325lbs and runs at a top speed of 15 mph

A war horse weighs on average 1,700lbs and runs upwards of 25 mph

Chariots usually had one driver and either an archer or a javelinier in the back on the cart. Chariots ran circles around people and were fast and mobile

Any army fit with horses and chariots was at a huge advantage. Which may have been the reason for Hazor becoming such a tremendous force in that region.

And this massive army was determined

“They came and camped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel.”

They had one common goal, to defeat Israel and keep them from advancing through Canaan

It would seem that Israel was underprepared for such a massive invasion. Until we read:

Joshua 11:6

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.”

Jabin may have been armed with a massive army, horses and chariots, but Israel was armed with something much stronger. They were armed with the promise of God

Horses are strong but the promises of God are much stronger

Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away but not the smallest marking of the Word of God."

Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.”

We may never face an innumerable cavalry armed with chariots but we will face obstacles that are much greater than ourselves. Like Joshua we have the choice of trusting in the promise of God and moving forward or cowering under the threat of the enemy

This is illustrated in 2Chronicles 32

We find Judah preparing to be attacked by the Assyrian forces.

- Senecharib king of Assyria had conquered every foe in the Fertile Crescent and was turning their attention upon Judah.

2Chron 32:1

"...he encamped against the fortified cities, thinking to win them over to himself"

- After building up the city walls, securing the water source, preparing the weapons of war Hezekiah gathered the people together and said;

2 Chronicles 32:7-8

*"Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that is with him; for there are **more with us than with him**. With him is an **arm of flesh**; but with us **is the Lord our God**, to help us and to fight our battles." And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.*

- Sennacherib did not give up easily. When he learned that the people were choosing to put confidence in the promises of God he sent messengers to Jerusalem saying;

2 Chronicles 32:15

Now therefore, do not let Hezekiah deceive you or persuade you like this, and do not believe him; for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people from my hand or the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you from my hand?"

- They even sent letters to the people and had those who spoke Hebrew call out to the inhabitants of Judah telling them how foolish it would be to trust in the Lord

2 Chronicles 32:17-18

He also wrote letters to revile the Lord God of Israel, and to speak against Him, saying, "As the gods of the nations of other lands have not delivered their people from my hand, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver His people from my hand." Then they called out with a loud voice in Hebrew to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten them and trouble them, that they might take the city.

- I love the response of Judah

2 Chronicles 32:20-21

*Now because of this King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, **prayed** and cried out to heaven. Then the Lord sent an angel who cut down every mighty*

man of valor, leader, and captain in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned shamefaced to his own land. And when he had gone into the temple of his god, some of his own offspring struck him down with the sword there.

They prayed and God delivered

No matter what it is important to remember that the promises of God are stronger than the enemies we face

In addition to a **promise** Joshua is also given **instruction**

They were to hamstring the horses and burn the chariots

Hamstring – cut the muscle so as to incapacitate an animal

This would seem **counterproductive**. It would seem wise to acquire the horses and chariots to strengthen the military of Israel for any future aggression. Instead God instructs them to burn the chariots.

It is clear that God does not want Israel to trust in anything other than Himself

Psalm 20:7-8

*⁷ Some trust in chariots, and some in horses;
But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.
⁸ They have bowed down and fallen;
But we have risen and stand upright.*

Isaiah 31:1-2

*Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help,
And rely on horses,
Who trust in chariots because they are many,
And in horsemen because they are very strong,
But who do not look to the Holy One of Israel,
Nor seek the Lord!*

When this message was given Assyria was turning its attention on Judah and they were tempted to look outside the Lord for help

Isaiah 31:4-5 (NLT)

⁴ *But this is what the Lord has told me:*

“When a strong young lion stands growling over a sheep it has killed, it is not frightened by the shouts and noise of a whole crowd of shepherds.

In the same way, the Lord of Heaven’s Armies will come down and fight on Mount Zion.

⁵ *The Lord of Heaven’s Armies will hover over Jerusalem and protect it like a bird protecting its nest. He will defend and save the city; he will pass over it and rescue it.”*

Joshua 11:7-11

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,^[a] 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.*

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.*

Joshua did as he was instructed

They went to battle as they were told

Upon defeating the enemy they destroyed the weapons of warfare

We find here a very important biblical principle

Our strength does not come from our resources

"How many fish do you have?"

"Silver and gold we do not have"

Revelation 3:8

"I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

We must never forget that our strength is not in our numbers or our resources. Our strength is always in the Lord. No matter what we face we can be encouraged by the words of Paul;

Ephesians 6:10

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Joshua 11:12

*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.***

Joshua 11:15

***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.*

Joshua 11:23

*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.*

Moses was commanded by the Lord and in turn commanded Joshua to make sure that the enemy was completely destroyed.

The reasons are explained

Exodus 34:12

Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst.

Numbers 33:55

But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell.

Joshua 12-13

Caleb

Joshua 12 - A Summary of the Battles

The first 6 verses look back to the battles led by Moses on the Eastern shore of the Jordan

They faced two mighty kings

- Sihon king of Amorites
- Of king of Bashan

There lands were distributed to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and 1/2 of Manasseh

These early victories serve as a constant reminder to Israel

Sihon is mentioned 34 times in Scripture and this battle is referred to as late as the times of Jeremiah

We should use past victories to increase our confidence in the Lord for the current challenges we are facing

Israel developed the practice of setting up memorial stones to remind them of the victories from their past

Verses 7-24 look back over Joshua and Israel's victories within the Promised Land

Joshua lists 31 kings and kingdoms that were defeated

Their lands were distributed among the remaining 9 1/2 tribes

Joshua 13 - Enlisting others in the Fight

Joshua 13:1

*Now Joshua was **old**, advanced in years. And the Lord said to him: "**You are old, advanced in years...***

Joshua's time is running out

He lived well, served well and accomplished what God had called him to

Joshua 11:15

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.

We might say of Joshua what was said of Paul

2 Timothy 4:6-7

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

A drink offering enhanced other offerings

One way to approach this is to look at how our life is being used to help others grow in Christ

What investments are you making in helping others grow in Christ?

Joshua 13:1

*"...and there remains very much **land** yet to be **possessed**."*

Joshua 13:2

*This is the land that **yet remains**:*

Joshua 13:6

*"...only **divide it by lot to Israel** as an inheritance, as I have commanded you."*

The division and distribution of the Land will be the subject from chapters 13-21

- The land will be divided and the tribes will be sent to occupy their inheritance
- Joshua led the charge to conquer the larger cities and the tribes will be responsible to participate by taking the smaller "hold-outs"

Imagine if Joshua led the battles to take Vero, Sebastian, Fort Pierce and , Port St. Lucie

It would be left to us to take Fellsmere and Yeehaw

- Several applications could be drawn from this

First

When you met Christ the **big battles** were accomplished for you

- Sin removed
- Death defeated
- Righteousness granted
- Eternal life provided

But we are left to fight the smaller battles

- Lust
- Anger
- Selfishness
- Bitterness
- Fear

These are the battles where our sanctification is developed

We learn how to resist the devil and crucify the flesh

Practically it is worked out this way

Our desires insight our emotions and our emotions drive us to actions hat are ungodly

At the same time the Spirit of God speaks the word of God into our minds and we recognize that our thoughts and subsequent actions are ungodly.

It is at that point when we must fight the battle for personal righteousness

It is there where we are left to conquer an enemy that was not fully defeated at the cross

Paul referred to it this way

Philippians 2:12

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

Philippians 2:13
for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Second

We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses who have gone before us.

Men like Joshua, David, Daniel, Peter, Paul and Timothy

Others like those who have led you to Christ, disciplined you in Christ and set an example for you

Now it is your turn to join the battle

We might summarize things this way.

Moses fought
Joshua fought
Now it's our turn

Israel is being enlisted to add their names to the list of faithful men and women who have gone before them

Our life is a link in a chain that goes back to Abraham. We have in our family line great heroes of the faith who became heroic because they chose to trust God in the midst of the challenging circumstances they were facing

Esther confidently made requests of her king

Davis walked valiantly into the field

Jeremiah chose to speak to the nation

Daniel refused to partake of the king's delicacies

- As the narrative moves ahead we are given insight into one particular tribe and one particular man within that tribe who sought to take His inheritance

Joshua 14:6-15

Caleb the Kennezzite

- Was not a descendant of Abraham
- Was born a slave
- Name means - dog

Caleb wholly followed the Lord

That was his epitath

Numbers 32:12

*except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have **wholly followed** the Lord.'*

Deuteronomy 1:36

*except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he **wholly followed** the Lord.'*

Joshua 14:8

*Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I **wholly followed** the Lord my God.*

Joshua 14:9

So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God.'

Joshua 14:14

*Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he **wholly followed** the Lord God of Israel.*

How was this demonstrated

- **Did not let past define him**

Remember he was born a slave, named dog and was not a descendent of Abraham

Yet he did not let a sordid past inhibit how God would use him in the present

Seems like there is a syndrome for everything (Not making light just pointing out that life is difficult for everyone)

Our upbringing often makes our adult life difficult

Only Child

- Pampered and spoiled
- Self-centered
- Feels unfairly treated when doesn't get own way.
- May refuse to cooperate.

First Child

- Is only child for period of time; used to being center of attention.
- May respond to birth of second child by feeling unloved and neglected.
- Strives to keep or regain parents' attention through conformity. If this failed, chooses to misbehave.

Middle Child of Three

- Feels life is unfair.
- Feels unloved, left out
- Feels doesn't have place in family.
- Becomes discouraged and "problem child" or elevates self by pushing down other siblings.

Youngest Child

- Behaves like only child.
- Expects others to do things, make decisions, take responsibility.
- Feels smallest and weakest. May not be taken seriously.
- Develops feelings of inferiority

To wholly follow the Lord is to not be held back by our past

Your past might be marked by an up and down relationship with Jesus

Your future does not have to continue that way

You can begin to abide in Christ today, establish roots in Him and grow into a mighty and impactful believer

- Followed in opportunity

When Moses was looking for men to spy out the land he chose Caleb

Caleb went into the Land trusting the promises of God over the threats they were facing

- Followed in obscurity

After entering into the Land, Caleb went dark for 45 years

We can assume that he participated in the corporate battles led by Joshua

We can also assume that he did not become discouraged or disalussioned when the promises he was given did not have an immediate fulfillment

- Leaned on the promises
 - 6- word
 - 9- Moses swore
 - 10- Lord spoke
 - 12- Lord spoke

We can find specific application for this truth in our current situation. As Hurricane Irma approaches we need to lean on the promises of God.

What promises can we hold onto when facing the storms of life?

Psalms 9:9-10

*The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed,
A refuge in times of trouble.
And those who know Your name will put their trust in
You;
For You, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You.*

Isaiah 40:29

*He gives power to the weak,
And to those who have no might He increases strength.*

Isaiah 40:31

*But those who wait on the Lord
Shall renew their strength;
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint.*

Isaiah 41:10

*Fear not, for I am with you;
Be not dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you,
Yes, I will help you,
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'*

Joshua 1:9
Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Isaiah 43:2
*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.
When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned,
Nor shall the flame scorch you.*

Isaiah 54:10
*For the mountains shall depart
And the hills be removed,
But My kindness shall not depart from you,
Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,"
Says the Lord, who has mercy on you.*

- Empowered by Spirit

Joshua 14:11
As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in.

Imagine 85 year old Caleb flexing his muscles. His bulging 40 year old Israeli Special forces biceps are now hanging below his triceps

The secret to being as strong at 85 as he was at 40 was always finding his strength in the Lord

How does the Spirit of God strengthen us?

- Followed in faith

Joshua 14:12
*Now therefore, **give me this mountain** of which the Lord spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the **Anakim** were there, and that the cities were*

*great and **fortified**. It **may be that the Lord** will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said."*

- Give me this mountain
 - Hacksaw ridge
- Hebron
 - Cave of Mechpelah where Abe and Sarah were buried
 - Caleb could not rest until what had once belonged to the kingdom of God was finally restored.
 - Sadly this is a stronghold today
- Anakim
 - Were the giants israel feared the most
 - Joshua 15:14
 - Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak from there: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak.
- It may be the Lord