

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
3-1-23

Joshua 11

The Northern Kings Of Canaan Gather Against Israel – Verses 1-5

¹ When Jabin king of Hazor heard of this, he sent word to Jobab king of Madon, to the kings of Shimron and Akshaph, ² and to the northern kings who were in the mountains, in the Arabah south of Kinnereth, in the western foothills and in Naphoth Dor on the west; ³ to the Canaanites in the east and west; to the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites and Jebusites in the hill country; and to the Hivites below Hermon in the region of Mizpah. ⁴ They came out with all their troops and a large number of horses and chariots—a huge army, as numerous as the sand on the seashore. ⁵ All these kings joined forces and made camp together at the Waters of Merom to fight against Israel.

11:1-5 Two kings of Hazor were named Jabin. The other, apparently a weak ruler, is mentioned in Judges 4:2-3. The Jabin of this story was quite powerful because he was able to build an alliance with dozens of kings. By all appearances, Jabin had a clear advantage over Joshua and his outnumbered forces. But those who honor God can be victorious regardless of the odds.

11:1 And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor heard these things: After hearing of Israel's total conquest of the south, the northern kings came together to defeat Israel. The huge army assembled together reflects an attitude that they believe they must stop Israel now or never.

All this was prompted by what the northern kings heard regarding Israel's success and victory. Walking in victory means that we become targets — when we are awakened, so is the devil.

11:4 They went out, they and all their armies with them: Two things indicate that now Israel faced challenges they had never faced before. First, the size of the enemy army: as many people as the sand that is on the seashore in multitude. Second, the technological superiority of the Canaanites: with very many horses and chariots.

11:4-5 The challenges brought to Israel seem to increase at each step, from Jericho, to Ai, to the battle with the southern kings, now to this battle. We often find that the challenges facing us in our Christian lives increase at each step. God uses each previous victory as a springboard for what we face in the future.

God's Encouragement To Joshua – Verse 6

⁶ The LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them, because by this time tomorrow I will hand all of them, slain, over to Israel. You are to hamstring their horses and burn their chariots.”

11:6 Tomorrow about this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel: This attack was new, and more severe than previous challenges. Joshua needed a fresh confirmation of God's promise for his life, and the Lord was faithful to bring it.

11:6 Do not be afraid because of them: This means that fear was an issue for Joshua and the people of Israel. God has a reason for everything He does, and He would not have assured them do not be afraid unless there was a reason for the encouragement.

Joshua Attacks The Northern Armies, And They Are Defeated – Verses 7-9

7 So Joshua and his whole army came against them suddenly at the Waters of Merom and attacked them, **8** and the LORD gave them into the hand of Israel. They defeated them and pursued them all the way to Greater Sidon, to Misrephoth Maim, and to the Valley of Mizpah on the east, until no survivors were left. **9** Joshua did to them as the LORD had directed: He hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots.

11:7 So Joshua and all the people of war with him came against them suddenly: Joshua fought with boldness and strategy, he surprised them with an unexpected ambush. Joshua fought with obedience, doing exactly what the Lord told him to do, even destroying the Canaanite weapons (the horses and the chariots) instead of taking them for his own army. Joshua fought with passion and commitment; he did not let up until he had accomplished as much as he could.

The Defeat Of Hazor, The Head Of The Northern Canaanite Kingdoms – Verses 10-15

10 At that time Joshua turned back and captured Hazor and put its king to the sword. (Hazor had been the head of all these kingdoms.) **11** Everyone in it they put to the sword. They totally destroyed^{a]} them, not sparing anyone that breathed, and he burned Hazor itself. **12** Joshua took all these royal cities and their kings and put them to the sword. He totally destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded. **13** Yet Israel did not burn any of the cities built on their mounds—except Hazor, which Joshua burned. **14** The Israelites carried off for themselves all the plunder and livestock of these cities, but all the people they put to the sword until they completely destroyed them, not sparing anyone that breathed. **15** As the LORD commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua, and Joshua did it; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses.

11:10-13 Victorious invaders usually kept captured cities intact, moving into them and making them centers of commerce and defense. For example, Moses predicted in Deuteronomy 6:10-12 that Israel would occupy cities they themselves had not built. Joshua, however, burned Hazor. As a former capital of the land, Hazor symbolized the wicked culture that Israel had come to destroy. In addition, its capture and destruction broke the backbone of the federation and weakened the will of the people to resist.

11:15 Joshua carefully obeyed all the instructions given by God. This theme of obedience is repeated frequently in the book of Joshua, partly because obedience is one aspect of life that each individual believer can control. We can't always control our understanding because we may not have all the facts. We can't control what other people do or how they treat us. However, we can control our choice to obey God. Whatever new challenges we may face, the Bible contains relevant instructions that we can choose to ignore or choose to follow.

11:15 Joshua followed every detail of God's commands to Moses. It is usually difficult to complete someone else's project, but Joshua stepped into Moses' job, building upon what Moses had started, and brought it to completion. A new person starting a new job usually brings a new style and personality to that job. But the church or any other organization cannot work effectively if every

change of personnel means starting from scratch. True servants will step in and continue or complete good work that others have begun.

Complete Victory Over Canaan, Over North And South – Verses 16-20

¹⁶ So Joshua took this entire land: the hill country, all the Negev, the whole region of Goshen, the western foothills, the Arabah and the mountains of Israel with their foothills, ¹⁷ from Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir, to Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings and put them to death. ¹⁸ Joshua waged war against all these kings for a long time. ¹⁹ Except for the Hivites living in Gibeon, not one city made a treaty of peace with the Israelites, who took them all in battle. ²⁰ For it was the LORD himself who hardened their hearts to wage war against Israel, so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

11:16-18 The conquest of much of the land of Canaan seems to have happened quickly (we can read about it in one sitting), but it actually took seven years. We often expect quick changes in our lives and quick victories over sin. Our journey with God is a lifelong process, however, and the changes and victories may take time. It is easy to grow impatient with God and feel like giving up hope because things are moving too slowly. When we are close to a situation, it is difficult to see progress. But when we look back, we can see that God never stopped working.

11:20 For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them: We are told that in part, this judgment on the Canaanites was accomplished when God did harden their hearts against Israel. The hardening of men's hearts is when God gives man up to the sin that is in his heart (Romans 1:24-28).

11:20 As the Lord had commanded Moses: We need not think that God poured out some particular judgment upon the Canaanites. He dealt with their hearts the same way He deals with all men's hearts, but God's grace either hardens the heart or it softens it.

The Anakim Are Defeated – Verses 21-22

²¹ At that time Joshua went and destroyed the Anakites from the hill country: from Hebron, Debir and Anab, from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua totally destroyed them and their towns. ²² No Anakites were left in Israelite territory; only in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod did any survive.

11:21 At that time Joshua came and cut off the Anakim from the mountains: It was fear of the Anakim — a tribe of exceptionally large and strong people — that had made Israel too afraid to enter the land some forty years before (Numbers 13:27-33).

11:22 None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel: Here, the foes of 40 years ago fall. They were no match for an army that was blessed and directed by God. Significantly, Israel faced the Anakim last, only after God had trained them in battle and in working with Him through the months of conquest.

11:22 When Israel refused to enter Canaan out of fear of the Anakim, they did not realize that God would so guide events that they would face this most difficult challenge last. God knows how to manage the battles in our lives. And we must allow God to manage those battles. All too often we are convinced that we must go out and fight the Anakim first, when God would have us face them last.

11:22 They remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod: The Anakim remained only in these coastal cities occupied by the Philistines. The giant Goliath comes from the city of Gath some five hundred years later (1 Samuel 17:4).

Complete Victory, And The Land Rests From War – Verse 23

23 So Joshua took the entire land, just as the LORD had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war.

11:23 So Joshua took the whole land: This brings us to another section of the book of Joshua. The power of the Canaanite kings within the land has been crushed, and in this sense, Joshua took the whole land. Yet, not every small town and village had been conquered and occupied. That was up to each individual tribe to do in the land that was apportioned to them.

11:23 Then the land rested from war: The end of this phase of conquest was a greater invitation to the tribes to cooperate with God. In the same sense, Jesus has already defeated the enemy and conquered the land, but He also calls us into battle to gain what is ours.