

## Joshua 11

**In the face of the defeat of the Southern Kings, what did the Northern Kings do (vv. 1-5)?** The alarm of the northern Canaanite kings was aroused by Joshua's crushing victories in the south. Though there was no love lost among those kings of the north, the threat of annihilation forced them into an alliance. Jabin, king of Hazor, organized a desperate attempt to stop the conquest of the land by the army of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

The combined army was impressive. Not only did it include vast numbers of soldiers, but in addition they had horses and chariots in great numbers. Josephus, a Jewish historian of the first century, speculated that this northern confederacy included 300,000 infantry soldiers, 10,000 cavalry troops, and 20,000 chariots.<sup>2</sup>

**What message did the Lord convey to Joshua (v. 6)?** The promise He gave Joshua was unmistakably clear: Do not be afraid of them (cf. 1:9; 8:1), because by this time tomorrow, I will hand all of them over to Israel, slain. This was just what Joshua needed to hear and Israel's leader took God's promise at face value, believing that He would give them the victory over their formidable foe. God even told Joshua specifically to hamstring their horses and to burn their chariots.<sup>3</sup>

**What does it mean to hamstring their horses?** To hamstring means to cut a tendon in the leg, disabling the horse.

**Why do you suppose God had Joshua hamstring the horses and burn their chariots (vv. 6, 9)?** So the enemy could not use them again. Also, there was the danger that Israel might develop a trust in these new weapons of war that they confiscated, rather than in the Lord. The Psalmist David declared, *"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God"* (Psalm 20:7).<sup>4</sup>

**How did the battle turn out (vv. 7-8)?** The next day Joshua surprised the enemy, attacking them at the Waters of Merom. They defeated the enemy, chasing them until no survivors were left. Following God's direction (v. 6) to the letter, Joshua killed all of the enemy, burned their chariots and hamstrung their horses.

**What special treatment did Hazor receive (vv. 10-11)?** Joshua turned back after routing the enemy army and captured all the cities of the defeated kings. Hazor, however, was singled out for special treatment, probably because it was by far the largest city of ancient Palestine (200 acres in size, compared with Megiddo at 14 and Jericho at 8). Hazor occupied a position of immense strategic importance on an ancient highway which led from Egypt to Syria. This location on the trade route contributed to the city's wealth.

Hazor alone among the northern cities was both seized and burned. Though Joshua may have decided to save the other captured cities for later Israelite use, he determined to make an example of Hazor, capital of all these northern kingdoms and the convener of their armies. If great Hazor could not escape, the Canaanites would be forced to acknowledge that any city could be burned if Joshua so decreed.<sup>5</sup>

**As Joshua totally destroyed all the royal, northern cities, what exception did he make (vv. 12-13)?** While the capital city of Hazor was burned, the other cities that stood on their mounds were destroyed but not burned. Perhaps Joshua felt that the cities standing on mounds would be useful to the Israelites who would settle there.

**How did the conquering Israelite army treat the northern cities (vv. 12-14)?** The inhabitants of all the cities were killed, and all the spoil including livestock was taken by the Israelites.

**What was the secret of Joshua's remarkable success (vv. 12, 15)?** From the human viewpoint, it was his consistent obedience to the Lord. *"He left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses."* We too will experience victory over our spiritual enemies—the world, the flesh, and the devil—to the extent that we obey the revealed will of God.

**What was Joshua's next major conquest (vv. 16-17)?** The remaining cities of the entire land. The battles fought by Joshua and his troops ranged over lands that stretched from border to border, from south to north, and from east to west.

**How long did it take (v. 18)?** The period of the conquest of the whole land evidently took about seven years.<sup>6</sup> Victory did not come easily or quickly; it rarely does.

**What was unique about the Gibeonites (v. 19)?** In all the military confrontations, only one city, Gibeon, sought peace. The rest were taken in battle.

**How did the Lord enable Joshua's victories (v. 20)?** God hardened the Canaanites' hearts (cf. Exodus 4:21; 8:15) to fight Israel so that they might be destroyed. The Canaanites' day of grace was gone. They had sinned against the light of God's revelation in nature (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:18-20), in conscience (Romans 2:14-16), and in His recent miraculous works at the Red Sea, the Jordan River, and Jericho. Now the sovereign God confirmed the hearts of these unrepentant people in their stubborn unbelief before judging them.<sup>7</sup>

**Who was the final group that was conquered by Joshua (vv. 21-22)?** The Anakites, the giants who had terrified the spies 45 years before (Numbers 13:33) of whom it was asked, *"Who can stand up against the Anakites?"* (Deuteronomy 9:2) But under Joshua those supposedly invincible foes were utterly destroyed. Only a few remained, in the remote cities of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod, which later proved to be an unfortunate oversight on Joshua's part because in David's time, Goliath came from Gath to defy Israel and her God (1 Samuel 17:4, 23).<sup>8</sup>

**What did Joshua do with the entire land once the wars concluded (v. 23)?** He gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. These words look forward and summarize the distribution of the land in chapters 13-22.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Donald K. Campbell, *"Joshua"* in the Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 352.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 353.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Joshua, 2025 Edition (published by Sonic Light), 108.

<sup>7</sup> Donald K. Campbell, *"Joshua"* in the Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 354.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.