**Joshua**

Chapter 11

*Northern Kings Defeated*

**When Jabin king of Hazor heard of this, he sent word to Jobab king of Madon, to the kings of Shimron and Acshaph, 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. 6 The Lord said to Joshua, “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.” 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. 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 them, not sparing anything that breathed, and he burned up 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. 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 struck them down, putting 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. 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. 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.**

**11:1–23** Only the northern cities remained to be conquered. The major battle for the hills of Galilee is fought and won against Hazor and the coalition of other northern city-states. A summary follows of all Joshua’s victories in the southern and central regions as well. (CSB)

**11:1** *Jabin king of Hazor.* Jabin is perhaps a dynastic name, used again in the days of Deborah (Jdg 4:2). The archaeological excavation of Hazor shows that it was the largest and best fortified of all the Canaanite cities. Its lower city measured 175 acres. (CSB)

**11:2** *Kinnereth.* Means “harp”; the Sea of Galilee. (CSB)

**11:4** *as numerous as the sand.* A widely used figure of speech for indicating large numbers (see note on Ge 22:17). (CSB)

Figure of speech to depict a seemingly impossible situation that the Lord will turn to victory. (TLSB)

*horses and chariots*. Sophisticated military equipment, which Israel did not have until the time of Solomon Israel was to rely on the Lord as their defense and offense. (TLSB)

**11:5** *All these kings.* Jabin’s muster extended as far as the Arabah (v. 2) in the Jordan Valley and as far as Dor on the Mediterranean, south of Mount Carmel. *Merom.* Probably modern Meirun, just northwest of Safed near the source of the Wadi Ammud (Marun)—some eight miles northwest of the Sea of Galilee. (CSB)

**11:6** *this time*. Despite overwhelming numbers, Joshua would be given victory over them within a 24-hour period, emphasizing the power of the Lord for Israel. (TLSB)

*hamstring their horses.* Done by cutting the tendon above the hock or ankle, crippling the horse so that it cannot walk again. (CSB)

Cutting the tendons on the hind legs of the horses so they could never bear or pull a load. (TLSB)

*burn their chariots.* These advanced implements of war were not used by the armies of Israel until the time of Solomon (see 1Ki 9:22; 10:26–29). (CSB)

**11:7** *came suddenly*. Before their armies were ready. The enemy chariots were not suitable for this wooded central hill country. (TLSB)

**11:8** *left none remaining*. Israel obeyed the Lord’s command of v 6. (TLSB)

**11:10** *turned back*. Another way of saying that when Joshua returned from pursuit and destruction of the previous kingdoms, he went on the offensive again. (TLSB)

*Joshua … captured Hazor.* Perhaps his greatest victory. Hazor’s armed forces, however, had been defeated earlier at Merom. The archaeological site reveals extensive damage and the burning of the Canaanite city c. 1400 b.c., c. 1300 and again c. 1230. Since the destruction level at c. 1300 probably indicates the burning of the city by Pharaoh Seti I, this leaves the destruction levels at c. 1400 and c. 1230 for Joshua’s conquest. Those who hold to the late date of the conquest opt for the 1230 level; those who hold to the early date opt for 1400 (see Introduction: Historical Setting). Once again the ban of total destruction was applied (v. 11). (CSB)

Due to its size, fortifications, and strategic location on the main north-south route from the Jezreel Valley to the Beqa Valley in Lebanon. Archaeology has confirmed the city’s greatness. (TLSB)

**11:13** *mounds.* The Hebrew word is *tel* (Arabic *tell*), a hill formed by the accumulated debris of many ancient settlements one above the other (see note on 7:2).

Cities on mounds were common because of their more defensible position. Apparently, the Israelites took possession of those cities that were not burned. (TLSB)

**11:15** *he left nothing undone.* Joshua’s success should be measured in the light of the specific orders given by God, which he carried out fully, rather than by the total area that eventually would have to be occupied by Israel. (CSB)

Stated to legitimize Joshua as Moses’ successor and to express that in everything, Joshua was faithful to all that the Lord had commanded Moses. (TLSB)

**11:16** *this entire land.* A lesson in the geography of Canaan follows. (CSB)

**11:17** *Mount Halak.* A desert peak to the east of Kadesh Barnea marking Israel’s southern extremity. (CSB)

*Baal Gad.* The first valley west of Mount Hermon. (CSB)

**11:18** *for a long time.* An estimation of the duration of Joshua’s conquests can be made from the life-span of Caleb: Seven years had elapsed from the beginning of the conquest (age 78; compare 14:7 with Dt 2:14) until he took Hebron (age 85; see 14:10).

C 7 years passed in the life of Caleb, who was 78 when the conquest began (cf 14:7; Dt 2:14) and 85 when Joshua took Hebron (cf 14:10). (TLSB)

**11:19** *not a city that made peace*. They were unwilling to submit to the Israelites, and the Lord hardened their hearts (v 20) so as to bring them to destruction. (TLSB)

**11:20** *the Lord… hardened their hearts.* God has sovereign control of history, yet his will never denies our personal and moral freedom (cf. the case of Pharaoh, Ex 8:32; 9:12). (CSB)

*no mercy*. Because they refused to submit. (TLSB)

**11:21** *Anakites.* Had been reported by the 12 spies to be a people “of great size” (Nu 13:32), whom the Israelites had feared so much that they had refused to undertake the conquest. They were related to the Nephilim (see note on Ge 6:4) and were named after their forefather, Anak. Joshua shared with Caleb his victory over the Anakites (14:12–15). (CSB)

Dreaded and oldest inhabitants of Canaan, whose presence convinced the spies sent by Moses to rebel against the Lord (Nu 13:28, 33). Possibly called “Ya’anaq” in Egyptian texts of the era. Elimination of this group serves as a conclusion to the conquest. (TLSB)

**11:22** *Gaza* … *Gath* … *Ashdod*. Some of the Anakim fled to these cities, a fact that may have later caused trouble for Israel, as Goliath would come from Gath (1Sm 17:4). (TLSB)

**11:23** *spoken to Moses*. Expresses Joshua’s faithful leadership as Moses’ successor. (TLSB)

*the land had rest from war*. Though there was still more land to possess, the time of war ceased for now. (TLSB)

 **Ch 11** The initial conquest of the land under the leadership of Joshua is completed. Joshua, by the hand of God, gives the Israelites the land as their inheritance. The Lord has said, “Do not be afraid” (v 6). Fear should not affect our faithfulness to the will and direction of the Lord. Jesus, by His faithfulness and His own hand, gives us the promised land of the new heavens and new earth as our eternal inheritance. • Gracious Lord, grant us faith in Your faithfulness, and accomplish Your service in and through us. Amen. (TLSB)