

JOSHUA

CHAPTER 11

Conquests in Northern Canaan

When Jabin, king of Hazor, heard of this, he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph, 2 and to the kings who were in the northern hill country, and in the Arabah south of Chinneroth, and in the lowland, and in Naphoth-dor on the west, 3 to the Canaanites in the east and the west, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites in the hill country, and the Hivites under Hermon in the land of Mizpah. 4 And they came out with all their troops, a great horde, in number like the sand that is on the seashore, with very many horses and chariots. 5 And all these kings joined their forces and came and encamped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel. 6 And the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them, for tomorrow at this time I will give over all of them, slain, to Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire.” 7 So Joshua and all his warriors came suddenly against them by the waters of Merom and fell upon them. 8 And the LORD gave them into the hand of Israel, who struck them and chased them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim, and eastward as far as the Valley of Mizpeh. And they struck them until he left none remaining. 9 And Joshua did to them just as the LORD said to him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire. 10 And Joshua turned back at that time and captured Hazor and struck its king with the sword, for Hazor formerly was the head of all those kingdoms. 11 And they struck with the sword all who were in it, devoting them to destruction; there was none left that breathed. And he burned Hazor with fire. 12 And all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua captured, and struck them with the edge of the sword, devoting them to destruction, just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded. 13 But none of the cities that stood on mounds did Israel burn, except Hazor alone; that Joshua burned. 14 And all the spoil of these cities and the livestock, the people of Israel took for their plunder. But every person they struck with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them, and they did not leave any who breathed. 15 Just 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. 16 So Joshua took all that land, the hill country and all the Negeb and all the land of Goshen and the lowland and the Arabah and the hill country of Israel and its lowland 17 from Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir, as far as Baal-gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. And he captured all their kings and struck them and put them to death. 18 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. 19 There was not a city that made peace with the people of Israel except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. They took them all in battle. 20 For it was the LORD's doing to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, in order that they should be devoted to destruction and should receive no mercy but be destroyed, just as the LORD commanded Moses. 21 And Joshua came at that time and cut off the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua devoted them to destruction with their cities. 22 There was none of the Anakim left in the land of the people of Israel. Only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod did some remain. 23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And 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 *in numerous like 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 Amud (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. (CSB)

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 *all the 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 *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). (CSB)

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)