

Joshua 11 Commentary

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Paul J Bucknell - Biblical Foundations for Freedom

LAND ALLOTMENTS
(Joshua 13-21)
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JOSHUA		
A BOOK ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE and REST		
HOW TO POSSESS YOUR POSSESSIONS		
CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND		CLOSE OF JOSHUA'S LIFE
ACTION		APPEAL
Josh 1:1-5:15	Josh 6:1-12:24	Joshua 13:1-21:45
WARLORDS IN CANAAN		LANDLORDS IN CANAAN

ENTERING CANAAN	CONQUERING CANAAN	DIVIDING CANAAN	
SECURING THE LAND		SETTLING THE LAND	
Preparation	Conquest	Possession	Consecration
ca. 1 Month	ca 7 Years	ca. 18 Years	

[See also more detailed Chart by Charles R Swindoll](#)

Joshua 11:1 Then it came about, when Jabin king of Hazor heard of it, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon and to the king of Shimron and to the king of Achshaph,

- **Jabin:** Jos 11:10 12:19 19:36 Jdg 4:2,17
- **he sent:** Jos 10:3,4 Ps 2:1-4 83:1-3 Isa 26:11 43:2,5-7
- **Madon:** The LXX. read [Maron,] which, if legitimate, Calmet thinks may be the same as Maronia or Marath, in Phoenicia, to the north of mount Lebanon, ch. 12:19, 20; 19:15, 25.
- **Shimron:** Supposed to be the same with Symira, in Coele-Syria, joined to Maron or Marath by Pliny and Pomponius Mela.
- **Achshaph:** Supposed by some to be the same as Achzib or Ecdippa; from which, however, it is distinguished in ch. 19:25, 29. It was in the northern part of the tribe of Asher.
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Hazor - Click to Enlarge

KING JABIN'S URGENT CALL TO ARMS!

Joshua 9-11 should be viewed in a sense as a unit, summarizing the conquest of the central, southern and finally the northern regions of the promised land. ([See map summarizing the central, southern and northern campaigns](#))

Dale Ralph Davis -Joshua 9–11 forms a fairly connected unit. We may briefly summarise it as follows:

Israel without Yahweh, 9:1–27

Yahweh with Israel, 10:1–11:15

Southern campaign, 10:1–43

Setting, 10:1–5

Summary, 10:40–43

Northern campaign, 11:1–15

Setting, 11:1–5

Summary, 11:12–15

Summary, 11:16–23 ([Joshua: No Falling Words](#))

Matthews - The word “**heard**” ([shama](#)) is a key term in chapter 9, where the Hebrew root occurs five times (9:1, 3, 9 [2×], 16). It also binds together chapters 9–11. “**Heard**” begins chapter 10’s events (Joshua 10:1; cf. 10:14, “listened”), and the same language begins chapter 11’s account (Joshua 11:1). What the southern and northern kings hear is a report of Joshua’s victories; unlike the Gibeonites, who have sought peace, the southern and northern coalitions muster troops. ([Joshua Teach the Text Commentary](#))

Then it came about - The Canaanites make one final attempt to destroy the people of God. The enemy was desperate and proceed to bring the largest force that Joshua has faced to this point (as best we can determine from the text).

When [Jabin](#) king of [Hazor](#) heard of it, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon and to the king of Shimron and to the king of Achshaph -**Jabin** means “one who is intelligent,” or “discerning.” **Heard of** what? Clearly the defeat of the kings in the central and south. The word has traveled about 80 miles from Gilgal that Israel had been invincible (with the exception of one small “hiccup” named Ai!) **Jabin** is clearly in “panic mode!” **Achshaph’s** name is interesting as it means a “place of sorcery!”

[Utley](#) - “**Hazor**” This was the largest walled city of Canaan. It covered over 200 acres. Apparently the Israelis did not occupy this site

because in Judges 4 it is a powerful Canaanite stronghold again.

Davis - We can appreciate Adoni-zedek's dismay (Josh 10:1–2) once we observe the strategic location of the Gibeonite 'tetrapolis' (Josh 9:17). The four towns, Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim, constituted a confederation of which Gibeon was apparently the dominant participant ([Joshua: No Falling Words](#))

Cyril Barber on Hazor - The city from which Jabin ruled was located nine miles north of the Sea of Galilee at Tell el-Qedah. It was the largest city in Palestine in Old Testament times, and reached its peak in the fifteenth to fourteenth centuries B.C. Archaeologists have estimated that it may have had a population of 40,000. The city itself was divided into two parts. It consisted of a bottle-shaped mound about 130 feet high with the upper city covering 25 to 30 acres. The lower city occupied between 175 to 200 acres, and was massive when compared to Jericho (about five acres) and Megiddo (approximately 20 acres). Jabin was a powerful monarch, and it is easy to see how he exerted great influence on the city-states of northern Canaan. ([Joshua: A Devotional Exposition](#))

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary - Verses 1-9. The wonders God wrought for the Israelites were to encourage them to act vigorously themselves. Thus the war against Satan's kingdom, carried on by preaching the gospel, was at first forwarded by miracles; but being fully proved to be of God, we are now left to the Divine grace in the usual course, in the use of the sword of the Spirit. God encouraged Joshua. Fresh dangers and difficulties make it necessary to seek fresh supports from the word of God, which we have nigh unto us for use in every time of need. God proportions our trials to our strength, and our strength to our trials. Joshua's obedience in destroying the horses and chariots, shows his self-denial in compliance with God's command. The possession of things on which the carnal heart is prone to depend, is hurtful to the life of faith, and the walk with God; therefore it is better to be without worldly advantages, than to have the soul endangered by them.

Holman Bible Dictionary - **Jabin king of Hazor** Personal name meaning, "he understands." King of Hazor (Joshua 11:1; Judges 4:1; Psalm 83:10). Leader of northern coalition of kings who attacked Joshua at the water of Merom and met their death (compare Joshua 12:19-24). Jabin, king of Hazor, controlled the Israelites when they turned away from God at Ehud's death (Judges 4:1-2). The biblical writer referred to him as "King of Canaan," a title representing his strong power in the northern part of the country, but a title kings of the other Canaanite city states probably would have strongly contested, since Canaan lacked political unity in that period. Jabin does not act in the story of Judges 4:1; rather Sisera, his general, represents him and is killed, leading to Jabin's loss of power. This Jabin must certainly be differentiated from the one Joshua fought, leading to the assumption by many scholars that a dynasty of kings in Hazor carried the name Jabin. Some have gone so far to identify him with Ibni-Adad, who appears in Near Eastern documents from Mari.

ISBE on Hazor - The royal city of Jabin (Joshua 11:1), which, before the Israelite conquest, seems to have been the seat of a wide authority (Joshua 11:11). It was taken by Joshua, who exterminated the inhabitants, and it was the only city in that region which he destroyed by fire (Josh 11:11-13). At a later time the Jabin Dynasty appears to have recovered power and restored the city (Judges 4:2). The heavy defeat of their army at the hands of Deborah and Barak led to their final downfall (Judges 4:23). It was in the territory allotted to Naphtali (Joshua 19:36). Hazor was one of the cities for the fortification of which Solomon raised a levy (1 Kings 9:15). Along with other cities in Galilee, it was taken by Tiglath-pileser III (2 Kings 15:29). In the plain of Hazor, Jonathan the Maccabee gained a great victory over Demetrius (1 Maccabees 11:67). In Tobit 12 it is called "Asher" (Septuagint Aser), and Kedesh is said to be "above" it. Josephus (Ant., V, v, 1) says that Hazor was situated over the lake, Semechonitis, which he evidently identifies with the Waters of Merom (Joshua 11:13). It must clearly be sought on the heights West of el-Chuleh. Several identifications have been suggested, but no certain conclusion can be reached. Some (Wilson and Guérin) favor Tell Harreh to the Southeast of Qedes, where there are extensive ruins. Robinson thought of Tell Khureibeh, 2 1/2 miles South of Qedes, where, however, there are no ruins. We may take it as certain that the ancient name of Hazor is preserved in Merj el-Chadireh, Southwest of Qedes, and North of Wady `Uba, and in Jebel Chadireh, East of the Merj, although it has evidently drifted from the original site, as names have so often done in Palestine. Conder suggests a possible identification with Chazzur, farther South, "at the foot of the chain of Upper Galilee. in position more appropriate to the use of the chariots that belonged to the king of Hazor"

H A Ironside applies Joshua 11 to the Christian life - Joshua's victories illustrate the Christian's triumph over the unseen hosts of evil who, acting under the leadership of Satan, the god and prince of this world, would seek to hinder believers from possessing practically that which God has given them in Christ Jesus. Many of us are defeated, when we ought to be victors, because of unjudged sin in our lives, or because of sloth and lethargy which hinder our laying hold of that for which God has laid hold of us. Blessed it is, if, like the Apostle Paul, we recognize the importance of pressing on toward the mark for the prize of the calling of God on high in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14, literal rendering). When God has promised to lead us on from victory to victory if we but cleave to Him with purpose of heart, it is the greatest folly to hold back and to fear lest we may not be able to overcome in the day of adversity.

1. Jabin king of Hazor. After the very remarkable reduction of the southern parts of Canaan, related in the foregoing chapter, the kings of the north becoming apprehensive for their safety, are here presented in the act of making a common interest, and uniting with Jabin to put a stop to the further progress of the Israelites. Jabin was probably the common name of all the kings of Hazor, as we find that the king by whom the Israelites were afterwards kept in bondage for twenty years, and who was defeated by Deborah and Barak, was so called. The name signifies wise, or intelligent. Hazor was a strong city on the west side of the waters of Merom, or lake Samechonitis, and the capital of northern Canaan. In the distribution of the land it fell to the tribe of Naphtali. It was in subsequent times frequently the seat of war, but not a ruin now remains to mark the place where it stood.

Madon. The position of this city is unknown. It was doubtless in the neighborhood of the others here mentioned.

Shimron. Called also Shimron-Meron, ch. 12:10. It fell afterwards to the lot of Zebulun, and was situated about eleven miles to the north-east of Nazareth.

Achshaph. Situated in the tribe of Asher, near the confines of Zebulun. It was reduced to a small village, called Chasalus, in the time of Jerome, at the close of the fourth century, but is now entirely swept away.

Joshua 11:2 and to the kings who were of the north in the hill country, and in the Arabah-- south of Chinneroth and in the lowland and on the heights of Dor on the west--

- **south of Chinneroth** Nu 34:11, Chinnereth, Lu 5:1, Gennesaret
- **on the heights of Dor** Jos 11:21 10:6,40 Lu 1:39
- **Chinneroth** : Jerome and others suppose this city to be same as was afterwards called Tiberias, now Tabaria, situated on the western shore of the lake of the same name. Jos 12:3
- **Dor**: Jos 12:23 17:11 Jdg 1:27 1Ki 4:11
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Northern Coastal Plains - click to enlarge
From Holman Bible Atlas (available for purchase in [digital](#) or [hardcover](#))
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(Click map to enlarge)

and to the kings who were of the north in the hill country, and in the Arabah (see [map](#))-- **south of Chinneroth and in the lowland and on the heights of Dor on the west** - Clearly Jabin sent out messengers over the entire northern regions. For example Dor was some 47 miles southwest of Hazor on the Mediterranean seacoast.

Chinneroth means "harp" because of the sea's harp shape and is the OT name for the Sea of Galilee and also the name of the town on the lake. In the NT (Lk 5:1) the Sea of Galilee is referred to as Lake of Gennesaret, a Greek spelling for the Hebrew Kinnereth. Used 7x in the OT - Num. 34:11; Deut. 3:17; Jos. 11:2; Jos. 12:3; Jos. 13:27; Jos. 19:35; 1 Ki. 15:20

The **lowland** is the [shephelah](#) refers to the low, rolling hills along the Palestinian coast and in context specifically refers to the northern region of this topography (i.e. the region north of Mt. Carmel)(19v in OT - Deut. 1:7; Jos. 9:1; Jos. 10:40; Jos. 11:2; Jos. 11:16; Jos. 12:8; Jos. 15:33; Jdg. 1:9; 1 Ki. 10:27; 1 Chr. 27:28; 2 Chr. 1:15; 2 Chr. 9:27; 2 Chr. 26:10; 2 Chr. 28:18; Jer. 17:26; Jer. 32:44; Jer. 33:13; Obad. 1:19; Zech. 7:7)

Utley on **Dor** - This refers to the coastal mountain ridge of which Mt. Carmel is the last rise before the Great or Upper Sea (Mediterranean).

Arabah (see [map](#)) - In twenty-five of its twenty-eight occurrences in the OT עֲרָבָה, Arabah, is a geographical name referring to that portion of the Rift Valley that stretches from the Sea of Galilee down to the southern tip of the Dead Sea. This section of the Rift Valley is sixty-five miles in length, varying in width from 3.5 to 14 miles. It is referred to in the Septuagint as "wasteland."

Believer's Study Bible - Chinneroth (12:3) or Chinnereth (13:27) is the O.T. name for the Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1), so named because it resembled a harp. It was later called the Sea of Galilee or Tiberias (John 6:1). There was a village and a surrounding plain named Chinnereth on the northwestern shore (Deut. 3:17; Josh. 19:35; 1 Kin. 15:20; Matt. 14:34).

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3. The Canaanite on the east, &c. The Canaanites, properly so called, dwelt part of them in the east near Jordan, and part on the west near the sea; both are here united.

The Hivite under Hermon. At the foot of mount Hermon; of which mountain see on Deut. 3:9. They are designated in this way to distinguish them from another portion of the same race dwelling at Gibeon, of whom we have already spoken.

In the land of Mizpeh. That is, the land of watching or espial, so called from its commanding an extensive prospect of the surrounding country, from which the approach or movements of an enemy might be discovered. There were several places of this name, but reference is here undoubtedly had to that lying in the northern quarter of Gilead, where Laban and Jacob made their covenant, as related Gen. 31:48, 49.

Joshua 11:3 to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Jebusite in the hill country, and the Hivite at the foot of Hermon in the land of Mizpeh.

- **the Jebusite:** Jos 15:63 Nu 13:29 2Sa 24:16
- **Hivite:** Jdg 3:3
- **Hermon:** Jos 13:11 De 4:48 Ps 89:12 133:3 Song 4:8
- **land:** Jos 18:26 Ge 31:49 Jdg 20:1 21:5,8 1Sa 7:5-7 10:17 1Ki 15:22 Jer 40:6,10 41:3,14
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Mount Hermon in the North

JABIN'S "S.O.S." TO ALL THE "ITE'S"

to the [Canaanite](#) on the east and on the west, and the [Amorite](#) and the [Hittite](#) and the [Perizzite](#) and the [Jebusite](#) in the hill country, and the [Hivite](#) at the foot of [Hermon](#) in the land of [Mizpeh](#) ("watchtower," "lookout"). - Jabin has managed to gather a confederacy from north to south and east to west. This was undoubtedly the largest enemy force Joshua had yet encountered.

Matthews - After the naming of the kings and the geography, the inhabitants are named, numbering six prominent nations (9:1; 12:8) whose defeat God has promised (3:10). That such diverse groups unite for war indicates their desperation. The Jebusites are better known from their kin in Jerusalem (15:63; 2 Sam. 5:7). ([Joshua Teach the Text Commentary](#))

Joshua 11:4 And they came out, they and all their armies with them, as many people as the sand that is on the seashore, with very many horses and chariots.

- **as the sand:** Ge 22:17 Ge 32:12 Jdg 7:12 1Sa 13:5 2Sa 17:11 1Ki 4:20
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Related Passages:

Genesis 22:17 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and **as the sand which is on the seashore**; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.

Genesis 32:12 "For You said, 'I will surely prosper you and make your descendants **as the sand of the sea**, which is too great to be numbered.'"

Judges 7:12 Now the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the sons of the east were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**.

1 Samuel 13:5 Now the Philistines assembled to fight with Israel, 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen, and

people like the sand which is on the seashore in abundance and they came up and camped in Michmash, east of Beth-aven.

2 Samuel 17:11 "But I counsel that all Israel be surely gathered to you, from Dan even to Beersheba, **as the sand that is by the sea in abundance**, and that you personally go into battle.

A PLENTITUDE OF PAGANS RESPOND TO THE PLEA

And they came out, they and all their armies with them, as many people as the sand that is on the seashore, with very many horses and chariots - Now the plot is thickening as they say! The "numerical phrase", **as many people as the sand that is on the seashore** grabs your attention. Not only did they have many men but **very many horses and chariots**. This is the first time Joshua would have faced **horses** and **chariots**. The central and southern sections were more hilly and not conducive to chariots. But in the northern region, there were plains that were flat and very good turf for chariots.

This clearly is **IM**-possible, but as Joshua soon discovers it is imminently **HIM**-possible!

The same principle applies to our life beloved. Supernatural enemies need supernatural strength!

Madvig makes an interesting observation that "'The northern coalition was Israel's most formidable foe in terms of both numbers and weaponry. Each successive battle that Israel fought was more difficult than the last." ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

Matthews - The coalition is at full force, as shown from the word kol ("all") and the term rab/rob ("large/huge/numerous") repeated three times. This is the first time the Hebrews face chariots. Their mobility and platform make them adept for battle in the plains, although flooding of the Kishon will make Hazor's chariots immobile in Barak's battle (Judg. 5:21). Only the most powerful armies are equipped with chariotry (17:16–18; Exod. 14:7). ([Joshua Teach the Text Commentary](#))

Donald Campbell - Josephus, a Jewish historian of the first century A.D., speculated that this northern confederacy included 300,000 infantry soldiers, 10,000 cavalry troops, and 20,000 chariots (**ED**: [Antiquities of the Jews, V:1:18](#). His figures cannot be corroborated.). The odds against the Israelites seemed overwhelming. How could Joshua hope to win this battle? (**ED**: GOD FREQUENTLY STACKS THE ODDS AGAINST PEOPLE SO THAT THEY MUST DEPEND ON HIM AND ONLY HE GETS THE GLORY!) ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

Utley - "**as the sand that is on the sea shore**" This is a Semitic idiom for a large military force (cf. Jdgs. 7:12; 1Sa. 13:5; 2Sam. 17:11). It was used in Genesis (cf. Ge 22:17; 32:12) to describe God's promises of many descendants to the Patriarchs.

THOUGHT - Someone has said that they further your progress in Christ-likeness, the greater and more difficult are the battles. Jesus' greatest battle certainly came at the end of His life.

Utley's TOPIC: Chariots The [Dictionary of Biblical Imagery](#) notes that chariots were used in three distinct ways (p. 138).

1. Royal transportation

- a. Egypt—Gen. 41:43; 50:9
- b. Israel—2 Sam. 15:1; 1 Kgs. 1:5; Song of Songs 3:9

2 Divine transportation—2 Kgs. 2:11; 6:17; Ps. 68:17; 104:3; Isa. 66:15; Jer. 17:25; Hab. 3:8

3. Military weapon (selected examples)

- a. Egypt—Exod. 14:6, 7, 9, 17, 18, 23, 26, 28; 15:4, 9; Deut. 11:4; Josh. 24:6
- b. Canaanite—Deut. 20:1; Josh. 11:4; 17:16, 18; Judg. 1:19; 4–5
- c. Philistine—Judg. 1:19; 1 Sam. 13:5; 2 Sam. 1:6; 8:4
- d. Israelite—1 Sam. 8:11–12; 2 Sam. 15:1; 1 Kgs. 10:26–29; Ps. 20:7; Isa. 31:1

The iron may have been around the chariot wheels or simply ornamental. It represented a superior technology!

GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 11](#)

4. And they went out. Took the field; a phrase frequently employed by the sacred writers for going forth upon a military expedition. Thus 2 Sam. 11:1, 'And it came to pass—at the time when kings go forth,' i. e. to battle, as our version rightly understands it. Comp. Num. 21:23; Job 39:21.

As the sand that is upon the sea-shore. A proverbial expression used to denote a vast but indefinite number—a number of which no accurate estimate could be formed. Josephus, upon what authority we know not, is more particular. He states the number at 300,000 foot, 10,000 horse, and 20,000 chariots of war. Whether this be correct or not, the words of the text lead us to infer that a vast population now occupied the land of promise, and that the soil must have been of exuberant fertility to sustain it. The immense

multitude, moreover, of the enemy went to heighten the glory of Joshua's victory.

With horses and chariots very many. Heb. סוס ורכב רב מאד sūs vâ-rêkeb rab meōd, horse and chariot very much. The horses were probably brought out of Egypt or Armenia, and not bred in Canaan, which was not a country favorable to their production or use. Deut. 17:16; 1 Kings 10:28, 29. The war chariots of the Canaanites are supposed to have been armed with iron scythes fastened to the poles and to the ends of the axletrees. When furiously driven they would make fearful havoc in the ranks of infantry—of which only were the forces of Israel composed—mowing them down like grass. In view therefore of such a formidable armament mustered against him, Joshua receives from the Lord a special encouragement and promise of success.

Joshua 11:5 So all of these kings having agreed to meet, came and encamped together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.

- **So all of these kings:** Ps 3:1 118:10-12 Isa 8:9 Rev 16:14
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A MEETING OF MINDS AT MEROM

So all of these kings having agreed to meet - Hebrew means "assembled by appointment."

Came and encamped together at the [waters of Merom](#), to fight against Israel - The location of the are uncertain ([see map](#) of possible location - note Shimeron-Merom is the city noted on the map). Although the text does not state specifically, undoubtedly these kings normally were not "[buddy, buddy](#)," but now that they were faced with annihilation, they came together. In short, they were proving true an ancient proverb that says "[The enemy of my enemy is my friend](#)."

TSK - [waters of Meron](#) - This is what Josephus calls the lake Semechon, now called Bahr-el-Houle (Lake Julius) between the head of the Jordan and the lake of Tiberias. According to Josephus it was seven miles long; and according to modern authorities, it is not above two miles broad, except at the north end, where it may be four.

Constable - The [waters of Merom](#) (v. 5) were evidently close to the village of Merom that was west of Hazor. Some scholars equate the waters of Merom with Lake Huleh. Lake Huleh lay to the north of the Sea of Chinnereth (Galilee). Others equate Merom with Madon, about five miles west of modern Tiberias. These locations seem less likely.

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5. Were met together. Heb. יִיגַעְדוּ yivvâedū, were assembled by appointment. In pursuance of previous arrangements. Chal. 'Met at a time agreed upon'

At the waters of Merom. Generally understood of the lake Semechon or Samechonitis, lying between the head of the river Jordan and the lake of Gennesaret. The name imports 'highness,' and is supposed to be so called because its waters were higher than those of the sea of Galilee. The Arabic Samaka, from which Semechon is derived, has the same import. It is situated in a valley, and is now called Bahhrat el-Hhule, i. e. the lake of the valley, a valley formed by the two branches of mount Hermon. In summer the lake is for the most part dry, and covered with shrubs and grass, in which lions, bears, and other wild beasts conceal themselves.

Joshua 11:6 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow at this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel; you shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire."

- **Do not be afraid because of them:** Jos 10:8 Ps 27:1,2 46:11
- **tomorrow at this time:** Jos 3:5 Jdg 20:28 1Sa 11:9 2Ch 20:16, hough, Jos 11:9 2Sa 8:4
- **you shall hamstring their horses:** De 7:16 Ps 20:7,8 46:9 147:10,11 Pr 20:7 Isa 30:16 31:1 Ho 14:3
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Joshua 1:5 "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.

Joshua 1:9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua 8:1 Now the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear or be dismayed. Take all the people of war with you and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land.

Isaiah 41:10 'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

JEHOVAH TO THE RESCUE!

Then - Marks progression in the narrative and immediately Joshua confers with Yahweh. Now it is time for God to speak! Notice His first words surely address Joshua's greatest doubts (and need).

The LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid because of them - Israel must have carried out reconnaissance, performing military observations and ascertaining that a huge army that was arrayed against them. Joshua would have thought something like "Mission Impossible," and in human terms that is correct, but not with God (cf Mk 10:27). Yahweh had made promises to Abraham, to Israel and to Joshua and He is ever faithful to keep His promises.

Had it been written in his day, Joshua would have sung this hymn after hearing these encouraging words....

Just When I Need Him Most

Just when I need Him, Jesus is near,
Just when I falter, just when I fear;
Ready to help me, ready to cheer,
Just when I need Him most.

Refrain:

Just when I need Him most,
Just when I need Him most,
Jesus is near to comfort and cheer,
Just when I need Him most.

Just when I need Him, Jesus is true,
Never forsaking, all the way through;
Giving for burdens pleasures anew,
Just when I need Him most.

Just when I need Him, Jesus is strong,
Bearing my burdens all the day long;
For all my sorrow giving a song,
Just when I need Him most.

Just when I need Him, He is my all,
Answering when upon Him I call;
Tenderly watching lest I should fall,
Just when I need Him most.

For - Term of explanation, explaining how God plans to keep His promises!

Tomorrow at this time - God is very specific, not just saying sometime in the future so you will need to wait. Before crossing the Jordan, Israel had to wait 3 days. Before conquering Jericho they had to wait 7 days. But this time Yahweh says "no waiting period" required.

Cyril Barber points out that "Joshua and the army of Israel must have been very close to the waters of Merom for the Lord to promise victory the next day, for Merom was upwards of 70 miles from Gilgal. We are justified in concluding that when information of the alliance of Canaanites reached Joshua, and before the Lord spoke to reassure him, Joshua had already marched north with all his men of war." ([Joshua: A Devotional Exposition](#))

I will deliver (Lxx = [paradidomi](#)) **all of them slain before Israel** - This "I will" was music to Joshua's ears! It was a verbal affirmation

of God's sovereign power and His promise to give Israel the land. God said it and Joshua believed it, even in face of overwhelming odds. He knew that one plus God was always a "majority!" Notice the quantitation of "**all of them slain**," exactly what transpired in Joshua 11:8. God's promises are always trustworthy and will always be completely fulfilled. Indeed, shortly before his death Joshua would be able to testify

Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.
(Joshua 21:45+)

"Now behold, today I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one word of all the good words which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed. (Joshua 23:14+)

You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire- This verse would be banned by the SPCA! But God says they must cripple the horses and consume the chariots. A hamstrung horse was no good in warfare and could not pull a chariot. Note the "I will" and "you shall," God's part, man's part. There is another element at play here -- Israel was not to capture either the horses or the chariots, with the aim to secure an advantage. They were to remain dependent on Yahweh and His presence, plans and power, not their own human ingenuity.

This reminds me of the words of David that

"Some boast in **chariots** and some in **horses**, but **we will boast in the Name** (His attributes, character, etc) **of the LORD, our God.**" (Ps 20:7, cf 1Co 1:31)

(COMPARE WORDS IN ISAIAH) Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help And rely on **horses**, And trust in **chariots** because they are many And in **horsemen** because they are very strong, **But they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the LORD!** (Isaiah 31:1)

Campbell offers another explanation asking "why did God command such drastic action, burning the chariots and hamstringing the horses? Because the Canaanites used horses in their pagan worship (and so later did Judah; cf. 2 Kings 23:11)." ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

Utley- Chariots were the ultimate military weapon of this period and area. Their origin and exact design are uncertain (Hyksos or Hittites). The different chariots could hold the driver and a soldier or the driver and two soldiers. They were usually pulled by two horses. The term "iron" could refer to the sides being reinforced or the wheels, rims, or axles. They were effective only on relatively flat ground.

QUESTION - . [Why did God sometimes order the Israelites to hamstring horses?](#)

ANSWER - To hamstring an animal means to cripple it by severing the large tendon at the back of the knee on the hind legs. These tendons are unable to heal or reunite. To hamstring a horse would render the animal incapable of any useful work after that. God sometimes ordered the Israelites to hamstring horses that had been captured in war.

Hamstringing an enemy's horses captured in war was a customary strategy throughout history. A hamstrung horse was disabled to the extent that it was ineffective for further military action. When a band of warriors captured an enemy's horses, they would hamstring any excess animals to prevent those horses from being used against them at a later time.

Before [Joshua](#) entered into battle with King Jabin of Hazor, God ordered him to hamstring all the horses that he would capture and burn their chariots with fire (Joshua 11:6–9). There are a few possible reasons why Joshua was given such a command. One is the reason just cited: to prevent the Canaanites from ever using those horses and chariots against Israel in the future.

Another potential reason God commanded the hamstringing of horses and the burning of chariots is that the Israelites were not yet trained to use horses and chariots, and therefore God required the destruction of those engines of war. And another possible reason is that God wanted to prevent Israel from relying on their own military strength and prowess. Without horses and chariots for future battles, Israel learned to depend on the Lord and give credit to Him alone for their success in combat: "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God" (Psalm 20:7; see also Isaiah 31:1).

By the time King David led his troops into war, the Israelites were well-trained in military conflict. David knew how to use horses and hamstrung only those he couldn't use: "David captured a thousand of [Hadadezer's] chariots, seven thousand charioteers and twenty thousand foot soldiers. He hamstrung all but a hundred of the chariot horses" (2 Samuel 8:4; see also 1 Chronicles 18:4).

The hamstringing of oxen is mentioned in Genesis 49:6: "Let me not enter [Simeon and Levi's] council, let me not join their assembly, for they have killed men in their anger and hamstrung oxen as they pleased" (Genesis 49:6). This act of crippling oxen was done purely out of spite, a reference to Simeon and Levi's plunder of Shechem's city because he had defiled their sister, Dinah

(Genesis 34).

Horses and chariots were ancient weapons of war. The age-old practice of hamstringing enemy horses and burning their chariots is based on the same principle of modern warfare. Any guns, ammunition, and provisions of captured enemy troops that cannot be carried off or converted to good use are destroyed. GotQuestions.org

Related Resource

- [Hamstring their horses](#)

GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 11](#)

6. Shall hough their horses. That is, hamstringing them, cut the sinews of their legs. On the effects of such a treatment of these animals, Michael is remarks, that 'from ignorance of military affairs, most expositors have understood this command, as if it meant, not that the horses should be killed, but merely lamed in their hind legs, and then let go. But a horse so treated, must, instead of running off, fall instantly backwards, and writhe about miserably till he die, which generally happens from loss of blood, by the stroke of the sabre cutting the artery of the thigh. This is still, as military people have since informed me, the plan adopted to make those horses that are taken, but cannot be easily brought away, unserviceable to the enemy again. They hamstringing them, which can be done in an instant; and they generally die of the wound by bleeding to death; but though they should not, the wound never heals; so that even if the enemy recover them alive, he is forced to dispatch them; and every compassionate friend of horses who has ever seen one in that situation, will do so in order to terminate his misery. There is no foundation for Kimchi's opinion, that mere laming was enjoined, because it would be wrong to put an animal unnecessarily to death. For thus to lame a horse that would still live, in my opinion, would rather have been extreme cruelty; because, being then useless, nobody would be likely to give him any food.' (Comment. on Laws of Moses, Art. LXIV.) The reasons for prescribing such a treatment probably were (1) Because God would have his people act upon the resolution expressed by the Psalmist, Ps. 20:7, 'some trust in chariots and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.' If horses had been in common use among them, they would have been apt to rely upon them instead of trusting to the aid of omnipotence in achieving their conquests. But God's design was to cut them off from human resources, and by enabling a company of raw and inexperienced footmen to rout bodies of cavalry, to secure the glory of the victory to his own right arm, to which only it was due. (2) Because horses were a kind of useless plunder to the Israelites. From the nature of the country they could not well be employed for purposes of agriculture. In that rough and mountainous land, oxen and asses could be employed to much greater advantage; and as to travelling, it was never designed that the Israelites should be a travelling people. They were to be an agricultural and not a commercial race. They were to live apart from other nations as a religious community. Their stated journeys to Jerusalem to attend upon the religious festivals would be about all the travelling that would be necessary, and this on their rough roads could be better performed on foot or on asses than on horses. Such of these animals therefore as they took in war could be of no use to them, unless they sold them, and this would not be wise, as they might finally have come round again into the hands of their enemies. The true policy accordingly was to diminish as far as possible this race of animals, which might give their enemies a signal advantage, and in this policy we suppose the present order to have originated.

Joshua 11:7 So Joshua and all the people of war with him came upon them suddenly by the waters of Merom, and attacked them.

- **suddenly:** Jos 10:9 1Th 5:2-3
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ANOTHER SURPRISE ATTACK!

So - The battle begins and other than the fact that it was a sudden attack, we are given no details.

Joshua and all the people of war with him came upon them suddenly by the waters of Merom, and attacked them- NET = "Joshua and his whole army **caught them by surprise** at the Waters of Merom and attacked them." This surprise attack was undoubtedly based on Joshua's hearing from Yahweh.

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7. Suddenly. The great feature of Joshua's military operations appears to have been dispatch. In the celerity of his movements he

seems to have equalled the most renowned generals whether of ancient or modern times. Being now apprised of this grand combination of the northern kings, he loses no time, but by a forced march, and before they could have supposed him at hand, comes suddenly upon them and puts them to the rout.

Joshua 11:8 And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, so that they defeated them, and pursued them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim and the valley of Mizpeh to the east; and they struck them until no survivor was left to them.

- **And the LORD delivered them:** Jos 21:44
- **great Zidon:** or, Zidon-rabbah, Jos 19:28 Ge 10:15 49:13 Zec 9:2
- **Misrephoth maim:** or, salt pits, Heb. burning of waters, Jos 13:6
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

YAWHEH DELIVERS MASSIVE ENEMY TO ISRAEL

And the LORD delivered (Lxx = [paradidomi](#)) **them into the hand** ([yad](#) = power) **of Israel** - We are reminded that "The LORD is a warrior; The LORD is His name." (Ex 15:3) But exactly how the LORD delivered the enemy is not stated. The fact is however clear that God **delivered** this seemingly powerful force into the power of Israel so that Israel's power was unquestionably superior.

So that they defeated ([nākāh](#)) **them** - This "power encounter" was clearly in favor of Israel (and Yahweh of course). Once again note God's deliverance and Israel's defeat of the enemy (God's part/man's part). **Defeated** ([nākāh](#)) is translated in Lxx with katakopto which means to cut to pieces, cut in a rough manner (Mk 5:5+)

And pursued them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim and the valley of Mizpeh to the east - Israel pursued the enemy toward the Mediterranean Sea. **Sidon** ([map](#)) was the contemporary capital of Phoenicia ([map](#)), later known as Tyre. [See map](#) for [Misrephoth-maim](#).

And they struck them until no survivor was left to them - This is an amazing declaration, for as noted above there may have been well over 300,000 soldiers and here we see that zero survive!

Defeated (struck)([05221](#)) [nākāh](#) meaning to beat, to strike, to wound. The meaning of the vb. ranges from hitting to killing. ni. be hit, be struck down; pu. be battered, ruined, destroyed; hi. strike, hit, beat, strike dead, wound, batter, destroy; ho. be struck down (dead), be taken, be hit (#5782); nom. מַכָּה (makkâ), blow, stroke, wound, plague. Defeat, conquer, i.e., have a military victory over an opponent or enemy (Jos 10:10)

Uses of nakah in Joshua - Jos. 7:5; Jos. 8:21; Jos. 8:22; Jos. 8:24; Jos. 9:18; Jos. 10:4; Jos. 10:10; Jos. 10:20; Jos. 10:26; Jos. 10:28; Jos. 10:30; Jos. 10:32; Jos. 10:33; Jos. 10:35; Jos. 10:37; Jos. 10:39; Jos. 10:40; Jos. 10:41; Jos. 11:8; Jos. 11:10; Jos. 11:11; Jos. 11:12; Jos. 11:14; Jos. 11:17; Jos. 12:1; Jos. 12:6; Jos. 12:7; Jos. 13:12; Jos. 13:21; Jos. 15:16; Jos. 19:47; Jos. 20:3; Jos. 20:5; Jos. 20:9;

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8. Unto great Zidon. A well known city of Ancient Phenicia, situated on the east coast of the Mediterranean, about twenty-five miles north of Tyre, fifty south of Berytus (Beyroot), and sixty-six west of Damascus. Its modern name is Said. The epithet רבה rabbâh, great, here affixed to it, is expressive of number rather than of size, and implies not only its populousness, but the extent and variety of its resources of every kind.

Misrephoth-maim. Or, Heb. מִשְׂרֵפּוֹת מַיִם Misrephoth of the waters; i. e. the turning of the waters; but whether so called from its being noted for hot springs, or the manufacture of glass, or of salt, each of which has been conjectured, or from some other cause, it is not possible to determine. It is supposed to have been a place on the sea coast, about three miles north of Sidon.

Valley of Mizpeh. Under mount Hermon, as appears by comparing this with v. 5 and 17, in the latter of which it appears to be called the valley of Lebanon. This place lay on the east, as Sidon did on the west, so that the vanquished enemy fled in two different directions, in both of which they were pursued by the conquerors.

Until they left them none remaining. From other portions of the history, it is plain that this language here and elsewhere, is not to be construed in its most literal import. Numbers of the Canaanites did undoubtedly escape the sword of the Israelites, and fled to

Zidon, Tyre and other maritime cities; and even here it appears that Jabin escaped with his life from the battle. But the drift of the words is to intimate, that they left none alive who fell into their hands, whomsoever they encountered or overtook they slew.

Joshua 11:9 And Joshua did to them as the LORD had told him; he hamstrung their horses, and burned their chariots with fire.

- Jos 11:6 Eze 39:9,10
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

And Joshua did to them as the LORD had told him; he hamstrung their horses, and burned their chariots with fire- " In this way the temptation for Israel to use these things in future battles was removed. The Lord was their surest defense, and as long as their eyes were on Him, and they lived in obedience to His revealed will, He would give them success." ([Cyril Barber](#))

Joshua 11:10 Then Joshua turned back at that time, and captured Hazor and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor formerly was the head of all these kingdoms.

- **Hazor:** Jos 11:1 Jdg 4:2
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

HAZOR THE HEAD KINGDOM "CUT OFF!"

Then Joshua turned back at that time, and captured Hazor and struck ([nākāh](#)) its king with the sword; for Hazor formerly was the head of all these kingdoms - After pursuing and slaying the enemy forces, now Joshua returns to the key Canaanite town. Note that this Jabin is killed and clearly is not the same as the one in Jdg 4:2.

Campbell - In the second phase of the conflict in northern Canaan Joshua returned 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). Occupying a position of immense strategic importance Hazor dominated several branches of an ancient highway which led from Egypt to Syria and on to Assyria and Babylon. This location on the trade routes contributed to the city's wealth. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary - Verses 10-14. The Canaanites filled up the measure of their iniquity, and were, as a judgment, left to the pride, obstinacy, and enmity of their hearts, and to the power of Satan; all restraints being withdrawn, while the dispensations of Providence tended to drive them to despair. They brought on themselves the vengeance they justly merited, of which the Israelites were to be executioners, by the command the Lord gave to Moses.

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10. Hazor—was the head, &c. Not of all Canaan, but of those northern principalities which were combined in this expedition against Israel. This city, however, afterwards recovered itself, and grievously oppressed the people of Israel, Judges 4:2.

Joshua 11:11 And they struck every person who was in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them; there was no one left who breathed. And he burned Hazor with fire.

- **breathed:** Heb. any breath, Jos 10:40
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 20:16 "Only in the cities of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes.

A FIERY END TO HAZOR

And they struck ([nākāh](#)) every person who was in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying ([charam](#); Lxx = [exolethreuo](#)) them; there was no one left who breathed - NET = "They annihilated everyone who lived there with the sword— no one who breathed remained— and burned Hazor."

And he burned Hazor with fire - This was apparently the only city that was burned at this time, presumably to make an example to others for it was the lead city of all the city states.

As **Campbell** explains "If great Hazor could not escape, the Canaanites would be forced to acknowledge that any city could be burned if Joshua so decreed." ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

Utterly destroy (destroy completely, devote) ([02763](#) [charam](#) means to destroy, to doom, to devote. This word is most commonly associated with the Israelites destroying the Canaanites upon their entry into the Promised Land (Deut. 7:2; Josh. 11:20). This word is used regarding almost all the cities which Joshua's troops destroyed [e.g. Jericho, Jos 6:21; Ai, Jos 8:26; Makkedah, Jos 10:28; Hazor, Jos 11:11] thus indicating the rationale for their destruction. Surrendering something irrevocably to God = devoting to service of God, excluding it from use or abuse of man &/or putting it under a ban for utter destruction. [Dt 7:2, 20:17] Usually haram meant a ban for utter destruction, compulsory dedication of thing impeding or resisting God's work which is considered to be accursed before God. Thus the basic idea = setting something aside strictly for God's use. Whatever was set aside was considered most holy by God & could not be sold or redeemed by any substitutionary measure. Once invoked it was absolutely compulsory.

Charam - 47v - annihilate(1), covet(1), destroy them utterly(1), destroy utterly(1), destroyed them utterly(1), destroying(1), destroying them completely(2), destruction(2), devote(2), forfeited(1), set apart(1), sets apart(1), utterly destroy(11), utterly destroyed(22), utterly destroying(3). Exod. 22:20; Lev. 27:28; Lev. 27:29; Num. 21:2; Num. 21:3; Deut. 2:34; Deut. 3:6; Deut. 7:2; Deut. 13:15; Deut. 20:17; Jos. 2:10; Jos. 6:18; Jos. 6:21; Jos. 8:26; Jos. 10:1; Jos. 10:28; Jos. 10:35; Jos. 10:37; Jos. 10:39; Jos. 10:40; Jos. 11:11; Jos. 11:12; Jos. 11:20; Jos. 11:21; Jdg. 1:17; Jdg. 21:11; 1 Sam. 15:3; 1 Sam. 15:8; 1 Sam. 15:9; 1 Sam. 15:15; 1 Sam. 15:18; 1 Sam. 15:20; 1 Ki. 9:21; 2 Ki. 19:11; 1 Chr. 4:41; 2 Chr. 20:23; 2 Chr. 32:14; Ezr. 10:8; Isa. 11:15; Isa. 34:2; Isa. 37:11; Jer. 25:9; Jer. 50:21; Jer. 50:26; Jer. 51:3; Dan.

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11. Not any left to breathe. Heb. נשמה nishmāh, any breath, i. e. not any human being.

He burnt Hazor with fire. Comp. v. 13. It is not said expressly of the Israelites, in this part of the narrative, that they burnt any city whatever, as such a statement might give rise to the impression that, in the ardor of military zeal, they were guilty of excesses, and in the spirit of a licentious soldiery, were eager to apply the torch to the devoted cities. On the contrary, the act is attributed to Joshua, implying that it was done calmly and deliberately, and in all likelihood by Divine direction. The phraseology is so constructed as to give a striking testimony to the moderation and self control of the armies of the Most High.

Joshua 11:12 And Joshua captured all the cities of these kings, and all their kings, and he struck them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed them; just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded.

- **all the:** Jos 10:28,30,32,35,37,39,40
- **as Moses:** Jos 11:15 8:8,31 9:24 10:40 Nu 33:52,53 De 7:2 20:16,17
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JOSHUA DID JUST AS YAHWEH COMMANDED

And Joshua captured all the cities of these kings, and all their kings, and he struck ([nākāh](#)) them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed ([charam](#); Lxx = [exolethreuo](#)) them; just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded - Once again we see Joshua's unerring obedience to Yahweh.

Utley - "Moses the servant of the LORD" This honorific title for Moses is found often in Joshua (cf. 1:7, 13, 15; 8:31, 33; 9:24; 11:12, 15; 12:6; 13:8; 18:7; 22:2, 4, 5). Moses is first called by this title in Exod. 14:31 and Num. 12:7. It is reaffirmed in Deut. 34:5

just before his death, so too, Joshua received this title close to his death in 24:17 (also in Jdgs. 2:8). Joshua, like Moses, represents YHWH before the people of Israel. They act on instructions from Him (cf. v. 20).

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12. Utterly destroyed them. That is, the persons, the inhabitants; for many of the cities themselves, as well as the spoils which they contained, were preserved, as we learn in the ensuing verse.

Joshua 11:13 However, Israel did not burn any cities that stood on their mounds, except Hazor alone, which Joshua burned.

- in their: Heb. on their heap, The Vulgate, Syriac, Onkelos and Waterland render {al tillom,} "on their hills." As the cities of the plain might be easily attacked and carried, Joshua destroyed them; but as those on mountains, hills, or other eminences, might be retained by him with little trouble, prudence would dictate their preservation. Jer 30:18
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CITIES BUILT ON MOUNDS WERE AN EXCEPTION

However - An exception.

Israel did not burn any cities that stood on their mounds, except Hazor alone, which Joshua burned. Why? The text does not tell us. [Archaeologically](#) this burning of Hazor has been confirmed.

"Hazor's fiery destruction took place in the days of Joshua. It's the only city he burned to the ground. **Archaeologists have found over 36 inches of charcoal and ash that confirm the biblical narrative.**" ([Hazor-Land of the Bible](#))

Paul P. Enns - Ancient Hazor has been identified through excavations as Tell el-Qedah in the plain of Huleh, five miles southwest of Lake Huleh and nine or ten miles north of the Sea of Galilee. The site was identified by John Garstang in 1926. Hazor was a uniquely fortified enclosure. It consisted of the city proper on a mound of 25 acres rising 165 feet above the road running past it. The camp area, a level plateau, occupied a total of 170 acres-- very large for that day. It was protected on two sides and partially on a third by steep watercourses. In addition, the city was surrounded on three sides by great ramparts of earth. (Joshua)

George Bush - "It would be difficult to point out any single expression in the whole book of Joshua, perhaps in the whole Scriptures, more difficult of explanation than this."

Utley on mounds" This is the Hebrew term "tel" or ruin (BDB 1068). Each successive rebuilding used the same site; thus, a mound was formed or at least heightened.

Mound (08510)(tel) masculine noun meaning a mound, a heap, ruins, the ruins left after a city has been destroyed. It refers to what signs may remain of a devastated and destroyed city. An apostate city was to be completely destroyed and left a heap of ruins, never to be rebuilt (Deut. 13:16; Josh. 8:28; Jer. 49:2). The word also means mounds, small or large man-made hills on which cities were repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt. An apostate city was to be completely destroyed and left a heap of ruins, never to be rebuilt (Deut. 13:16).

Tel - 5x - Deut. 13:16; Jos. 8:28; Jos. 11:13; Jer. 30:18; Jer. 49:2

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13. The cities that stood still in their strength. Heb. עמדות על תלם *ōmeedeth al lillām*, standing upon, or by, their heaps. **It would be difficult to point out any single expression in the whole book of Joshua, perhaps in the whole Scriptures, more difficult of explanation than this.** The exact literal version of the words we have given above; but our common translation has followed the Chaldee paraphrase in rendering the Heb. תל *tal*, by 'strength,' a sense which it has in no other instance, that we can discover, in the compass of the sacred writings. Its prevailing and legitimate import is a 'heap of ruins.' Thus Deut. 13:16, in reference to the city which had become the seat of idolatry; 'Thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof for the Lord thy God; and it shall be an heap (תל) for ever; it shall not be built again.' Josh. 8:28,

'And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap (תל) for ever, even a desolation unto this day.' Jer. 49:2, 'I will cause an alarm of war to be heard in Rabbah of the Ammonites, and it shall be a desolate heap (תל שממה tal shemâmâh), and her daughters shall be burned with fire.' Jer. 30:18, 'The city shall be builded upon her own heap (תלה tillâh);' i. e. upon its own ruins. These examples show the genuine force of the word. The mass of expositors, however, from the affinity of the ideas of a heap of ruins and an eminence, or elevation of any kind, and not knowing what to understand by cities 'standing upon their ruinous heaps,' have been led to interpret it of cities standing upon hills, or rocky heights, forming natural fortresses of great strength, and such as the Israelites chose to retain for their own use. To this solution we should have nothing to object were it warranted by the native import of the term; but we are persuaded it is not. The true rendering is unquestionably that which we have given, and a consistent sense is to be sought for the phrase. From an attentive comparison of the context, it appears that the kings and the inhabitants of these cities were all put to the sword, while the cattle and the spoil generally went into the hands of the captors. During the time, therefore, of the actual occurrence of these events, the cities in question must have presented a fearful scene of carnage and desolation. Heaps of lifeless bodies and of gathered spoil would be accumulated in the streets, and wherever such a complete conquest and pillage could be easily effected without demolishing the walls, buildings, or fortifications of the cities, those cities might, be said to 'stand still, or continue to stand upon, over, or by their ruinous heaps,' i. e. heaps of the slain and heaps of spoil. This doubtless was the case in numerous instances. It was not absolutely necessary to raze and burn all the cities, and so many of them were spared; but Hazor being the head of the confederacy and more guilty than the rest, was properly made an exception and utterly destroyed.

Save Hazor only. As this city had begun the war, and from its being a royal residence and strongly fortified might, if it should fall back into the hands of the Canaanites, possess peculiar facilities for renewing and carrying it on afresh, Joshua deemed it prudent to guard against all danger from that quarter by demolishing it altogether.—So the Christian, if he finds his spiritual enemies likely to entrench themselves in any particular corruption or infirmity of his nature, and thence to make violent inroads upon his peace, is bound at all hazards, by crucifying such a lust, to deprive them of this advantage. If they can be dislodged from their stronghold in no other way, let him destroy the stronghold itself.

Joshua 11:14 And all the spoil of these cities and the cattle, the sons of Israel took as their plunder; but they struck every man with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them. They left no one who breathed.

- **spoil:** Jos 8:27 Nu 31:9 De 6:10,11 20:14
- **neither:** Jos 11:11 10:40
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

TO THE VICTOR GO THE SPOILS

And all the spoil of these cities and the cattle, the sons of Israel took as their plunder; but they struck([nākāh](#)) every man with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed ([shamad](#); Lxx = [exoletreuo](#)) them.

They left no one who breathed - This refers to human beings. Livestock, sheep, cattle, goats, would have been plunder.

Destroyed (demolished, exterminated) ([08045](#)) [shamad](#) is a verb meaning "be destroyed, decimated, perished, overthrown, exterminated, i.e., pertaining to being in a totally ruined state, which can include death of a person or extinction of an entity." The destruction depicted by **shamad** usually involves a rather sudden catastrophe such as warfare or a mass killing. For example in Dt 6:15 God says He will "**wipe**" Israel off the face of the earth, so great was His anger against them! It is worth noting that the last OT use of **shamad** is one of the greatest for the nation of Israel, the prophet **Zechariah** recording "And in that day (WHAT DAY? - Read Zechariah 12:1-14⁺) I (JEHOVAH/YAHWEH HIMSELF) will set about to destroy all (HOW MANY?) the nations that come against Jerusalem." (Zechariah 12:9⁺) [Anti-Semitism](#) will be obliterated! The prophet Isaiah gives a prophecy that should startle every person who is not a believer in the Messiah - "**Behold**, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it." (Isa. 13:9⁺)

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14. All the spoils of these cities—Israel took With the exception of such things as had been employed for idolatrous purposes, Deut. 7:25.

Joshua 11:15 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.

- **Just as the LORD had commanded:** Jos 11:12 Ex 34:11-13
- **so Moses:** De 7:2 31:7
- **Joshua:** Jos 1:7 Ex 39:42,43 De 4:5 2Ch 30:12
- **he left nothing:** Heb. removed nothing, De 4:2 12:32 1Sa 15:1-3,8,9,11,19-22 Mt 23:23 Lu 11:42 Ac 20:20,27
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE POWER OF AN OBEDIENT LEADER

O, how we need to hear and heed these words in America!

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 - Note the same phrase repeats **the LORD had commanded** and **“Commanded”** appears three times for emphasis. What an incredible testimony. He was not just a hearer but a doer of the word (James 1:22)! This passage emphasizes the key to Israel's victory was the obedience of their leader Joshua.

THOUGHT - Here is the key to victory over our powerful enemies, the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#). Ponder the words **"Joshua DID...left NOTHING UNDONE...ALL the LORD had COMMANDED."** This is a powerful testimony to the faithfulness of Joshua and is without doubt a key to victory in the Christian life. And what is the key word? It is the word **obedience, unhesitating and complete!** Do you have some "Canaanites" that you have spared, so that they are still able to steal, kill and destroy your abundant life, a life of victory in Christ? Do not procrastinate! **KILL THEM! TODAY!** May God so direct our steps and our stops that we would willingly obey (enabled by His Spirit - Ro 8:13+) His Word, so that when we come to the end of all our battles in this short time on earth, it could be said of us he or she **left nothing undone!** Amen (cf Ps 90:12)!

[Believer's Study Bible](#) - Note the repeated testimony to Joshua's obedience (cf. v. 9). The verse also makes clear that Israel's destructiveness was not their idea but God's.

[Utley](#) - **“Moses the servant of the LORD”** This honorific title for Moses is found often in Joshua (cf. 1:7, 13, 15; 8:31, 33; 9:24; 11:12, 15; 12:6; 13:8; 18:7; 22:2, 4, 5). Moses is first called by this title in Exod. 14:31 and Num. 12:7. It is reaffirmed in Deut. 34:5 just before his death, so too, Joshua received this title close to his death in 24:17 (also in Jdgs. 2:8). Joshua, like Moses, represents YHWH before the people of Israel. They act on instructions from Him (cf. v. 20).

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary - Verses 15-23. Never let the sons of Anak be a terror to the Israel of God, for their day to fall will come. The land rested from war. It ended not in a peace with the Canaanites, that was forbidden, but in a peace from them. There is a rest, a rest from war, remaining for the people of God, into which they shall enter, when their warfare is accomplished. That which was now done, is compared with what had been said to Moses. God's word and his works, if viewed together, will be found mutually to set each other forth. If we make conscience of our duty, we need not question the performance of the promise. But the believer must never put off his armour, or expect lasting peace, till he closes his eyes in death; nay, as his strength and usefulness increase, he may expect more heavy trials; yet the Lord will not permit any enemies to assault the believer till he has prepared him for the battle. Christ Jesus ever lives to plead for his people, and their faith shall not fail, however Satan may be permitted to assault them. And however tedious, sharp, and difficult the believer's warfare, his patience in tribulation may be encouraged by the joyfulness of hope; for he will, ere long, rest from sin and from sorrow in the Canaan above.

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15. As the Lord commanded Moses, &c. A virtual vindication of the Israelites from the charge of cruelty which might possibly be brought against them in view of the severities exercised towards these vanquished kings and people of Canaan.

He left nothing undone. Or, Heb. לא הסיר דבר *lō hēsir dābār*, removed, rejected, diminished nothing.

Joshua 11:16 Thus Joshua took all that land: the hill country and all the Negev, all that land of Goshen, the lowland, the [Arabah](#) (see [map](#)), the hill country of Israel and its lowland

- **all that land:** Ge 15:18-21 Nu 34:2-13 De 34:2,3

- **hill:** Jos 9:1 12:8
- **land:** Jos 10:41
- **the hill country of Israel:** Jos 11:21 Eze 17:23 36:1-3,8
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SUMMARY OF THE LAND CONQUERED FROM SOUTH TO NORTH

In Joshua 11:16-23 the writer gives us a summary of the scope of Israel's victories in the Promised Land. This description begins with the geography areas conquered (v16-23) and then continues in Joshua 12:1-24 to give a list of the kings that Israel conquered.

Cyril Barber has an interesting comment - Summary of the Conquest, Joshua 11:16–12:24 The verses contained in this section of the book of Joshua can be likened to a travelog such as is seen at the beginning of documentaries of the National Geographic Society or programs on the Discovery or History channels. These programs often begin with an overview—an eagle's eye view over the terrain in which the events took place—and this sets the stage for what is to follow. It is excellent pedagogical methodology! ([Joshua: A Devotional Exposition](#))

Thus Joshua took all that land: the hill country and all [the Negev](#), (see [map](#)) all that land of Goshen, the lowland, the [Arabah](#) (see [map](#)), the hill country of Israel and its lowland ([shephelah](#) - see [nice cross-sectional maps](#)) - This overview of what Israel had accomplished begins in the south and moves northward. And notice that the writer refers to the **hill country** as the **hill country of Israel!** And in Joshua 11:22 he calls the land, **the land of the sons of Israel!** Clearly Israel was finally in possession of her promised possessions!

Utley - "land of Goshen" This refers to an area in the hill country of Judah (cf. Joshua 10:41; 11:16; 15:51).

Campbell - "[The Negev](#)" (see [map](#)) is the desert area southwest of the Dead Sea (ED: and south of Judea) and the [Arabah](#) (see [map](#)) is the depression of the Jordan Valley north and south of the Dead Sea. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

Cyril Barber - [The Negev](#)" (see [map](#)) or southland is a term that refers to the little-watered region situated south of Judea. In Bible times it was a principal grazing area. It covers about 3,600 square miles and contains important biblical sites such as Kadesh-Barnea and Beersheba. The [Arabah](#) (see [map](#)) is a word generally applied to a desert area, but specifically refers to the valley between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. The valley is about one hundred miles in length and is somewhat wider in the north than in the south. ([Joshua: A Devotional Exposition](#))

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16. The mountain of Israel and the valley of the same. Not any particular mountain and valley, but the mountains and valleys generally included in the whole extent of the land of Israel.

Joshua 11:17 from Mount Halak, that rises toward Seir, even as far as Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon at the foot of Mount Hermon. And he captured all their kings and struck them down and put them to death.

- **that rises:** Ge 32:3 De 2:1 33:2
- **Seir:** Jos 11:3 1:4 12:7 13:5
- **all their:** Jos 12:7-24 De 7:24
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Mount Hermon in the North

from Mount Halak that rises toward Seir, - Halak is in the southern desert region in proximity to [Mount Seir](#) (Easu's fortress, also known as Petra) pinpoints its general location.

[Holman Bible Dictionary](#) - Halak - Place name meaning, "barren" or "naked." Mountain marking southern extent of Joshua's conquests (Joshua 11:17; Joshua 12:7). It is identified with jebel Halak, about 40 miles southwest of the Dead Sea in Edom.

Even as far as [Baal-gad](#) in the [valley of Lebanon](#) at the foot of [Mount Hermon](#) - Here he describes the northern region. The Valley of Lebanon was probably about 30–40 miles north of the Sea of Galilee.

[Utley - Baal-gad](#)" Baal was the male fertility god of Canaan. Every town had its own worship altar. Many of the towns of Canaan had the male god Ba'al or the female Asherah or Ashtarte in their names (cf. 12:4). The term "gad" (BDB 151) apparently meant "good fortune" (cf. Gen. 30:11, BDB 151 II) and was used of a Canaanite deity (cf. Isa. 65:11). (See [note by Kitto](#), [Holman Bible Dictionary](#), [Watson on Baal](#))

Related Resource:

- See study of all Hebrew words translated **Baal**

And he captured all their kings and struck ([nākāh](#)) them down and put them to death - All the leaders were executed so they might not later lead a rebellion.

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17. From the Mount Halak. That is, Heb. ההר החלק *hâhâr hêhâlâk*, the bare, smooth, or bald mountain, so called from its being destitute of trees. The writer's design seems to be to specify the extreme southern and northern limits of the promised land. Joshua's conquests extended from the borders of Seir or Edom, where Mount Halak was situated, northward to Baal-gad, which lies at the foot of Mount Lebanon.

Joshua 11:18 Joshua waged war a long time with all these kings.

- **a long time:** Jos 11:23 14:7-10
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

APPROXIMATELY SEVEN YEARS OF WAR

Joshua waged war a long time with all these kings - The best estimates are that war lasted for about 7 years. Clearly this chapter is like a Reader's Digest Condensed Book version of the warfare Joshua undertook to take the land.

Campbell - Victory did not come easily or quickly; it rarely does. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

THOUGHT - Are you involved in war with the "Canaanites" in your life? Of course you are. Every believer is daily in war against the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#). Here is the point we need to remember so that we do not become discouraged -- victory does not come easily or quickly in the Christian life. So do not grow weary and lose heart dear soldier of the Cross.

TSK - Caleb was forty years old when sent from Kadesh-barnea to spy the land, and he was eighty-five at the conclusion of this war. (Josh 14:10.) Almost thirty-nine years of this time were spent before Israel passed Jordan; which leaves between six and seven for the term of Joshua's wars.

Wiersbe adds this note "The "long time" of verse 18 is about seven years. Israel's failure at Kadesh Barnea (Deut. 2:14), at which time Caleb was forty years old (Josh. 14:7) to their crossing of the Jordan was thirty-eight years. He was eighty-five when the Conquest was over (Josh 14:10), which means that at least seven years had been devoted to the campaign." ([Be Strong - Joshua: Putting God's Power to Work in Your Life](#))

Believer's Study Bible - This verse suggests that the account of the conquest of the land is merely a summary of the actual events, and that there were undoubtedly periods of time between the battles.

Norman Geisler - JOSHUA 11:18—Was Canaan conquered quickly or only gradually?

PROBLEM: This verse declares that “Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.” But earlier (in Joshua 10:42) it affirms that “all these kings and their land Joshua took at one time.”

SOLUTION: These two texts refer to different kings at different times. The first passage speaks of the southern campaigns which went rapidly. But the other verse has reference to the northern battles which took much longer. ([When Critics Ask](#))

Alan Carr - We Must Fight With Determination—This verse tells us that Joshua fought his battles for a long time. This tells me that this man had determination! That is a quality that needs to be developed by all the children of the Lord! Too many are quitting in our day! Too many are throwing in the towel and giving up the fight. We need some people who will vow before the Lord this morning that come what may, they will stand for Him and will be in His service all the way until the end. That is the command we have from Paul, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.” (1 Cor 15:58). Dear friends, don’t quit! Some of you are so close to dropping out on God that it isn’t even funny. I beg you to come to Him this morning and let Him fan the dying embers back into a raging flame for His glory! Your life does not have to become shipwrecked, “Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:” (1Ti 1:19)....Folks, eventually, the battles of life will be over, the long day will be finished and we who are saved will go home to Heaven to rest in that glorious place. In the meantime, however, there are enemies and there are battles that must be fought. Now, we can either fight them with our own weapons and lose, or we can fight them the way the Lord has shown us and win (2Cor 10:3-5, Eph 6:10-18). Which would you rather have: defeat or victory (cf 1Jn 5:4-5, cf Jn 16:33)? I don’t know what you are fighting today, but I know Who can help you with that battle. Bring that thing to Jesus and let Him get you safely through the fight. ([Joshua 10:6-14 Valuable Lessons For The Day Of Battle](#))

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18. Joshua made war a long time. Heb. ימים רבים yāmim rabbim, many days. As many at least as six or seven years; as appears from comparing ch. 14:7–10; the first having been occupied in the conquest of the southern portion of the land, and the remaining five or six in that of the northern. It would seem that the writer by inserting this statement here designed to guard the reader against the impression that, as the record of these wars is very brief, so the space of time in which they were accomplished was also brief. This by no means follows, as the present account is intended as a mere rapid sketch or outline of Israel’s victories over the nations of Canaan. In the sacred writings the compass of a few sentences often contains the events of many years.—We may not perhaps be able to state all the reasons that weighed in the Divine mind for thus prolonging the warfare of his people, but of one we are assured by God himself, Deut. 7:22, ‘The Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little; thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.’ In addition to this, it was no doubt the purpose of heaven to try the faith and patience of his people by a long series of arduous struggles. Although the commencement of the work was marked by a succession of wonderful interpositions in their behalf, yet in its progress they were to be left more to their personal exertions. God would not make his miraculous aid too cheap in their eyes by making it common. He would train them to a course of the most vigorous efforts on their part, while at the same time they were taught their continual dependence on Him for success in their conflicts. This is in beautiful analogy with the warfare of the Christian. In its commencement, at the outset of the Christian life, the power of God is no less wonderfully displayed than in the history before us. The transition of a soul from darkness to light is virtually a miracle. It is effected by the sovereign power of God as really, and to the sinner’s consciousness in many instances as marvellously, as the passage of Israel through the cloven waters of Jordan. But in its progress, the work is carried forward more appropriately by his own actings. He has the armor given him, but his own activity is called forth in the use of it. His whole life is to be a state of warfare, and it is by hard fighting that he is to obtain the victory. No one enemy will submit to him without an obstinate resistance, nor until violently smitten with the sword of the Spirit. There will be some seasons of more than ordinary conflict, when he will need peculiar succor from on high; and there will be other seasons of comparative rest; but there is no entire discharge in this war till mortality is swallowed up of life; and then he shall enjoy the fruit of his victories in everlasting rest.

Joshua 11:19 There was not a city which made peace with the sons of Israel except the Hivites living in Gibeon; they took them all in battle.

- the Hivites: Jos 9:3-27
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

There was not a city which made peace with the sons of Israel except the Hivites living in Gibeon; they took them all in

battle - Only one made peace and that one did it deceptively.

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19. Not a city that made peace—save the Hivites, &c Although in the commands given to Moses respecting the extirpation of the Canaanites we have no express intimation that any of them were to be spared upon their voluntary surrender and submission, yet from the example of Rahab and the Gibeonites, and especially from these words, the presumption is, that this was the case. The Divine laws, wherever it can be done without compromising the interests of justice, always lean to the side of mercy. Besides, it has been justly remarked, that the reason of the law is the law. The evil designed to be prevented by the order for the universal destruction of the Canaanites, was the infecting of the Israelites with their idolatry, Deut. 7:4. But if these devoted nations renounced their idolatry, and came heartily into the interest of Israel, the danger was effectually prevented, the reason of the law ceased, and consequently, we may suppose, the obligation ceased also. But the Canaanites in general were not in the least disposed to do this, nor did they so much as propose terms of accommodation. Of the cause, or occasion rather, of this utter infatuation, we are informed in the ensuing verse.

All other they took in battle. That is, all whom they did take, they took in battle. They received none upon submission. It is certain from other parts of the sacred narrative, that the Canaanites were neither utterly exterminated, nor absolutely driven from their settlements, either by Joshua or his immediate successors. On the contrary, a large proportion of them fled, it is supposed, to Tyre and Zidon, and thence migrated into distant countries, particularly Africa, where they established numerous and flourishing colonies. Procopius relates that the Phœnicians fled before the Hebrews into Africa, and spread themselves abroad as far as the pillars of Hercules, and adds, 'In Numidia, where now stands the city Tigris (Tangiers) they have erected two columns, on which, in Phœnician characters, is the following inscription:—"We are the Phœnicians, who fled from the face of that notorious robber, Jesus (or Joshua) the son of Nave (Nun)." ' Numbers, however, yet remained to dispute, for ages, the possession of the land with their invaders, and to cause them infinite trouble.

Joshua 11:20 For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, to meet Israel in battle in order that he might utterly destroy them, that they might receive no mercy, but that he might destroy them, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

- **it was:** Ex 4:21 9:16 De 2:30 Jdg 14:4 1Sa 2:25 1Ki 12:15 22:20-23 2Ch 25:16 Isa 6:9,10 Ro 9:18,22,23
- **as the LORD had commanded Moses:** Jos 11:12-15 De 20:16,17
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Exodus 4:21+ (**GOD FIRST GIVES A PROPHETIC PROMISE**) The LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power; but **I will harden his heart** so that he will not let the people go. (YAHWEH DID BUT NOTICE PHARAOH HARDENED HIS HEART!)

Exodus 8:15+ (cf Ex 8:32+) (**PHARAOH'S WILLFUL CHOICE TO HARDEN HIS HEART**) But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, **he hardened his heart** and did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

Exodus 9:12+ (Ex 10:1+) And the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

Deuteronomy 2:30+ "But Sihon king of Heshbon was not willing for us to pass through his land; for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, in order to deliver him into your hand, as he is today.

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; **He turns it wherever He wishes.**

GOD'S MANDATE "TAKE NO PRISONERS!"

For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts- NET = "the LORD determined to make them obstinate" God did not harden their hearts out of spite, but to fulfill His justice. They had already made a choice to harden their hearts much like Pharaoh's hardened his heart (Exodus 8:15+ Ex 8:32+), so the purposes of God might be accomplished. Their hardening was righteous and was punitive

because from Genesis 15:16+ it is clear God had already give Canaanites over 400 years to repent. Not only that, God had made sure the Canaanites heard the revelation of His great power in delivering Israel from Egyptian slavery some 40 years earlier. More recently they had heard the revelation of what God did "to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og" (Josh 2:10+). And yet they refused to repent, even though Rahab received this truth about God and repented! The kings (and all the Canaanites) had the same opportunity to repent as Rahab had done and yet they refused! Their "day of grace" had passed! This verse is a reminder that God is sovereign and in complete charge of every situation in every age! Note the fact that Yahweh **"hardened their hearts"** does not imply that the kings otherwise would have been submissive had He not hardened their hearts. It is also notable that the Gibeonites made a similar declaration as Rahab (Josh 9:9-10+) and they acted on that truth about God (were they saved, or some of them saved, like Rabah? That's difficult to state with certainty, but it is certainly a possibility, considering that they later served in the House of God and around the altar of God!)

We have already seen hardening of hearts described with other rulers (Pharaoh, Ex. 4:21; Ex 7:3; Ex 9:12; Ex 10:1, 2, 20, 27; 11:10; Sihon king of Heshbon – Dt 2:30+)

The hardening of men's hearts similar to what God does in Romans 1 when He three times gives truth rejecting mankind up to the sin that is in their heart (Woe!)

Therefore God gave them over ([paradidomi](#) - gave over to the power) in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them over ([paradidomi](#) - gave over to the power) to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. 28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over ([paradidomi](#) - gave over to the power) to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,(Romans 1:24–28+).

Campbell points out that the Canaanites "had sinned against the light of God's revelation in nature (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:18–20), in conscience (Rom. 2:14–16), and in His recent miraculous works at the Red (Reed) Sea, the Jordan River, and Jericho. Now the sovereign God confirmed the hearts of these unrepentant people in their stubborn unbelief before judging them." (**ED: RECALL JERICO - ALL HEARD TRUTHS ABOUT ISRAEL AND GOD BUT ONLY RAHAB RESPONDED WITH FAITH!**) ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

Utley - **"for it was of the LORD to harden their hearts"**This is a biblical metaphor of God's control over human events to accomplish His purpose. This has nothing to do with the issue of "free will." The thrust of this context is YHWH's control of history and events (particularly redemptive events, cf. Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28). This is similar to God's actions with Pharaoh (cf. Exod. 4:21; 7:3, 13; 8:15, 32; 9:12, 34; 10:20, 27; 14:4, 17).

Guzik - We need not think that God parceled 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.

To meet Israel in battle - God so moved in their hearts that they would attack Israel and not seek peace.

In order that he might utterly destroy ([charam](#); Lxx = [exolethreuo](#)) **them** - God's purpose was ultimate and total annihilation.

That they might receive no mercy, but that he might destroy ([shamad](#)) **them, just as the LORD had commanded Moses - No mercy** but destruction is a description of hearts that are so depraved that God has given them over to their sins and the just punishment for their abominable sins! This is indeed a frightening description.

THOUGHT - Dear reader, if you have never taken refuge from the coming wrath of God, then you need to immediately **repent and believe** in the Gospel of Jesus Christ (see the commands of Jesus in Mark 1:15+) before it is too late! One day it will be too late and your doom will be eternally sealed!

Cyril Barber rightly states that "Sin had run its course. The evils wrought by the Canaanites and Amorites caused the Lord to given them over to a hardness of heart (cf. Ro 1:18–19, 24–32). In the end the judgment of God came upon them, and their hearts were so hardened by sin they never thought of repentance (cf. Hebrews 10:32). ([Joshua: A Devotional Exposition](#))

Butler - "Here is a biblical lesson which has always been difficult for the people of God to learn. Deuteronomy commanded Israel to obey God, destroy the inhabitants, have no mercy, make no covenant, make no marriages (7:1–3). Such a command had a divine purpose. It removed the temptations to follow other gods. From the days of the Judges and especially from the period of Solomon onward, the great temptation was to make political alliances through covenants and political marriages between royal families (1 Kgs 11:1–8; 16:31; 20:30–43). To protect Israel against the major sin of idolatry, God commanded her not to show mercy to the enemy.

To enable her to keep his commandment, God caused her enemies to fight her rather than seek mercy and peace.” ([Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 7, Joshua](#))

Harden (02388) (**chazaq**) conveys the basic meaning of to be or become strong (Jos. 17:13), to make strong or strengthen, in the Hiphil to take hold of or seize ("retain His anger" - Mic 7:18⁺), in the Hithpael to strengthen oneself (to take courage 1 Sa 30:6). To be courageous. To overpower. **Chazaq** describes strength - severity of a famine (a "strong" famine) (2 Ki 25:3, Jer 52:6), strength of humans to overpower (David and Goliath 1Sa 17:50, cf 1Sa 17:35 = seized; Amnon and Tamar = 2Sa 13:14), in a battle, to capture (2Chr 8:3), Samson's last demonstration of supernatural strength he prays "please **strengthen** me" (Jdg 16:28). Used in the charge "**Be strong** and courageous" (Josh 1:6, 7, 9, 18, Josh 10:25, "be firm" = Josh 23:6; "**Be strong** and courageous" = Dt 31:6-7, 23). **Chazaq** used 12 times in Ex 4-14 of hardening Pharaoh's heart (cf similar use in Josh 11:20). In a great passage in Da 11:32⁺ we read "'By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but **the people who know their God** will display **strength** (**chazaq**) and take action." As in the Qal, when the object of the verb is the heart (ten times), the verb is translated "harden" (Exodus 4:21f.) W E Vine adds "The strong form of the verb is used in Exod. 4:21: "...I will harden his [Pharaoh's] heart...." This statement is found 8 times. Four times we read: "Pharaoh's heart was hard" (Exod. 7:13, 22; Exod. 8:19; Exod. 9:35, niv; kjv, rsv, nasb, "was hardened"). In Exod. 9:34 **Pharaoh's responsibility is made clear by the statement** "he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart...."

All uses of chazaq in Joshua - Jos. 1:6; Jos. 1:7; Jos. 1:9; Jos. 1:18; Jos. 10:25; Jos. 11:20; Jos. 17:13; Jos. 23:6;

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20. It was of the Lord to harden their hearts. On the subject of God's hardening the hearts of men, see Note on Ex. ch. 4:21. The meaning here is simply that having sinned for a long tract of ages against the light of conscience and providence, God was now pleased to leave them to a judicial hardness of heart, to give them up to vain confidence, pride, stubbornness, and malignity, that they might bring upon themselves his righteous vengeance and be utterly destroyed. This result is said to be 'of or from the Lord,' because he did not interpose to prevent it.

As the Lord commanded Moses. This expression occurs here and elsewhere in this connexion, v. 15, 'to show that Joshua and Israel did not act out of cruelty, revenge, and avarice; but simply in obedience to God, which alone could induce pious men to make such undistinguishing slaughter of their fellow-creatures: and doubtless many of them did very great violence to their own feelings and inclinations, while engaged in that service.' Scott.

QUESTION - [Why did God harden Pharaoh's heart?](#)

ANSWER - Exodus 7:3-4 says, "But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt, he will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out...my people the Israelites." It seems unjust for God to harden Pharaoh's heart and then to punish Pharaoh and Egypt for what Pharaoh decided when his heart was hardened. Why would God harden Pharaoh's heart just so He could judge Egypt more severely with additional plagues?

First, Pharaoh was not an innocent or godly man. He was a brutal dictator overseeing the terrible abuse and oppression of the Israelites, who likely numbered over 1.5 million people at that time. The Egyptian pharaohs had enslaved the Israelites for 400 years. A previous pharaoh—possibly even the pharaoh in question—ordered that male Israelite babies be killed at birth (Exodus 1:16). The pharaoh God hardened was an evil man, and the nation he ruled agreed with, or at least did not oppose, his evil actions.

Second, on at least a couple occasions, Pharaoh hardened his own heart against letting the Israelites go: "But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart" (Exodus 8:15). "But this time also Pharaoh hardened his heart" (Exodus 8:32). It seems that God and Pharaoh were both active in one way or another in the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. As the plagues continued, God gave Pharaoh increasingly severe warnings of the final judgment to come. Pharaoh chose to bring further judgment on himself and his nation by hardening his own heart against God's commands.

It could be that, as a result of Pharaoh's hard-heartedness, God hardened Pharaoh's heart even further, allowing for the last few plagues and bringing God's full glory into view (Exodus 9:12; 10:20, 27). Pharaoh and Egypt had brought these judgments on themselves with 400 years of slavery and mass murder. Since the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), and Pharaoh and Egypt had horribly sinned against God, it would have been just if God had completely annihilated Egypt. Therefore, God's hardening Pharaoh's heart was not unjust, and His bringing additional plagues against Egypt was not unjust. The plagues, as terrible as they were, actually demonstrate God's mercy in not completely destroying Egypt, which would have been a perfectly just penalty.

Romans 9:17-18 declares, "For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: 'I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in

you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.' Therefore God has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy, and He hardens whom He wants to harden." From a human perspective, it seems wrong for God to harden a person and then punish the person He has hardened. Biblically speaking, however, we have all sinned against God (Romans 3:23), and the just penalty for that sin is death (Romans 6:23). Therefore, God's hardening and punishing a person is not unjust; it is actually merciful in comparison to what the person deserves. GotQuestions.org

The Lord Hardened Pharaoh's Heart?

Note that the same topic is raised again in Deuteronomy 2:30, Joshua 11:20 and 1 Samuel 6:6. While these allusions are briefer, one can be sure that the process of accountability and human responsibility was just as fair as in the case of Pharaoh.

The theme of "hardening" occurs twenty times between Exodus 4 and 14. But the most troublesome aspect of these verses is that in ten out of the twenty occurrences God himself is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart. This fact troubles many readers of the Scriptures, for it appears God authors evil and then holds someone else responsible. Did God make it impossible for Pharaoh to respond and then find Pharaoh guilty for this behavior?

God twice predicts he will harden Pharaoh's heart. These two prophetic notices were given to Moses before the whole contest began (Ex 4:21; 7:3). However, if these two occurrences appear to cast the die against Pharaoh, it must be remembered that all God's prophecies to his prophets have a suppressed "unless you repent" attached to them. Few prophecies are unconditional; these few include God's covenant with the seasons in Genesis 8:22; his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David; his new covenant; and his covenant with the new heavens and the new earth in Isaiah 65–66.

In general, only the promises connected with nature and our salvation have no dependence on us; all others are much like Jonah's message to Nineveh. Even though Jonah never even hinted at the fact that Nineveh's imminent destruction (only forty days away) could be avoided by repentance, the king assumed such was the case, and Jonah's worst fears were realized: the nation repented and the barbarous Assyrians did not get what was coming to them!

In Pharaoh's case, Pharaoh initiated the whole process by hardening his own heart ten times during the first five plagues (Ex 7:13, 14, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 34, 35; and 13:15). It was always and only Pharaoh who hardened his heart during these plagues! Rather than letting the work of God soften his heart during these plagues and concluding that Yahweh is the only true God, Pharaoh made this evidence the basis for hardening his heart. Meanwhile, the plagues must have had some impact on the general population of Egypt, for when the Israelites left Egypt, they were accompanied by "many other people" (Ex 12:38). Even Pharaoh's own magicians confessed, "This is the finger [the work] of God" (Ex 8:19), and they bowed out of the competition with the living God.

It appears that Pharaoh reached the limits of his circumscribed freedom during the fifth plague, for after that time, during the last five plagues, God consistently initiated the hardening (Ex 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17).

God is not the author of evil. There is no suggestion that he violated the freedom of Pharaoh's will or that he manipulated Pharaoh in order to heap further vengeance on the Egyptian people. God is not opposed to the cooperation of pagan monarchs. Pharaoh could have cooperated with God just as Cyrus did in the Babylonian exile; God was still glorified when that king decided on his own to let Israel return from Babylon. If Pharaoh had acted as King Cyrus would later do, the results of the exodus would have been the same. It is Pharaoh, not God, who is to be blamed for the hardening of his own heart. ([Hard Sayings of the Bible](#))

Joshua 11:21 Then 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 utterly destroyed them with their cities.

- **the Anakim:** Jos 14:12-14 15:13,14 Nu 13:22-23 De 1:28 2:21 9:2 Jdg 1:10,11,20 Jer 3:23 9:23 Am 2:9
- **Joshua utterly destroyed:** Jos 10:42 24:11,12 Ps 110:5,6 149:6-9 Rev 6:2 19:11-21
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 1:28+ Where can we go up? Our brethren have made our hearts melt, saying, "The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and fortified to heaven. And besides, **we saw the sons of the Anakim there.**"

JOSHUA UTTERLY DESTROYED THE ANAKIM (MOST OF THEM)

Then - Marks progress in the narrative, in this case dealing with the "big boys!" This is a reversal and refutation of the unbelief of the 10 spies in Numbers 13:27-33+!

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 utterly destroyed ([charam](#); Lxx = [exolethreuo](#)) them with their cities - The giant **Anakim** were no match for Joshua and His "giant" God.

Rod Mattoon - **Anakim** means "long neck." The word was used of chains around the camel's neck. These were the giants of the land and the reason why God's people would not go into Canaan the first time. The Anakims terrified the spies. They felt like grasshoppers. God kept His promise though and helped Israel to conquer them. The greatest worry and fear of Israel was conquered by the Lord. He will do the same for our worries and fears too. Our worries and fears do not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but only empty today of its strength. Fear not tomorrow, God is already there. When it comes to your actions, if you fear that which people will know, don't do it. No matter how awesome the giants are in our life, Jesus Christ can help us conquer them and give us rest. Whether its sinful habits, broken relationships, severe temptation, health problems, financial or marriage problems, the Lord can solve your problems and get you through your trials. ([Treasures From Joshua](#))

[Guzik](#) adds an interesting thought - Significantly, Israel faced the Anakim last, only after God had trained them in battle and in working with Him through the months of conquest.. When Israel refused to enter Canaan out of a fear of the Anakim, they did not realize that God would manage their affairs so they would face this most difficult challenge last. God knows how to manage the battles in your life.. 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.

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21. At that time. That is, during this war; in the course of these conquests. The words refer to no special point of time, as the work was gradually accomplished during the lapse of a considerable period. Some suppose this to be merely a recapitulation of the military operations detailed ch. 10:36–41, adding here a memorable circumstance there omitted, viz. the destruction of the Anakims, with the rest of the inhabitants of those places. Of this gigantic race, see on Num. 13:33. Their cutting off is particularly mentioned here, because they had been such a terror to the spies forty years before, to whom their bulk and strength made them appear as absolutely invincible. Even the opposition which they feared the most was overcome. 'Never let the sons of Anak be a terror to the Israel of God, for even their day will come to fall. Giants are dwarfs to Omnipotence.' Henry. Though these Anakims were now for the most part reduced, yet numbers of them escaped and took refuge in the country of the Philistines, and settled there, from whom Goliath, and other giants, descended. After a time some of them returned with followers, and rebuilt the cities from which they had been expelled; and Caleb and Othniel, to whom that region was assigned, vanquished and destroyed them after the division of the land. Ch. 14:6–15; 15:13–17.

Joshua 11:22 There were no Anakim left in the land of the sons of Israel; only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod some remained.

- **only in Gaza:** Jdg 3:3 1Sa 17:4 2Sa 21:16-22 1Ch 18:1 29:4-8
- **Ashdod:** Jos 15:46 2Ch 26:6 Ne 13:23,24
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Numbers 13:28 "Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, **we saw the descendants of Anak there.**

Deuteronomy 9:2 **a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim**, whom you know and of whom you have heard it said, '**Who can stand before the sons of Anak?**' (**ANSWER:** Joshua in the power of Jehovah!)

**MOST OF THE GIANTS
WERE "CUT DOWN TO SIZE!"**

There were no [Anakim](#) left in the land of the sons of Israel; only in [Gaza](#), in [Gath](#), and in [Ashdod](#) some remained - It is notable that these were the same giants the Israelite spies had feared in Nu 13:28! Joshua for some reason did leave a few Anakim in the coastal cities that were later occupied by [the Philistines](#). The giant Goliath comes from the city of Gath some five hundred years later (1 Samuel 17:4).

Campbell remarks that the fact that **some remained** "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 (1Sa 17:1-58) ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

Rod Mattoon on **some remained** - The Anakims are driven out except for the Philistine cities of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. This oversight would later afflict Israel in the time of David. Goliath was an Anakim who came from Gath. He defied God and Israel. The lesson here is if a problem is not dealt or conquered, it can come back to haunt you later on. Wild oats need no fertilizer. ([Treasures From Joshua](#))

QUESTION - [Who were the Anakim / Anakites?](#)

ANSWER - The Anakim/Anakites were a formidable race of giant, warlike people (Deuteronomy 2:10, 21; 9:2) who occupied the lands of southern Israel near Hebron before the arrival of the Israelites (Joshua 15:13). The Anakim's ancestry has been traced back to Anak, the son of Arba (Joshua 15:13; 21:11), who at that time was regarded as the "greatest man among the Anakim" (Joshua 14:15).

The name "Anakim" most likely means "long-necked," i.e., "tall." The Hebrews thought them to be descendants of the Nephilim, a powerful race who dominated the pre-Flood world (Genesis 6:4; Numbers 13:33). When the twelve Israelite spies returned from exploring the Promised Land, they gave a frightening report of "people great and tall" whom they identified as the sons of Anak (Deuteronomy 9:2). The Israelites, seized with fear and believing themselves to be mere "grasshoppers . . . in their sight" (Numbers 13:33), rebelled against God (Deuteronomy 1:26-28) and refused to enter the land God had promised them.

The Israelites were exhorted by Moses (Deuteronomy 1:19) not to fear the Anakim, but they refused to trust God's promises (Deuteronomy 1:32-33). As a result, God became angry (Deuteronomy 1:34-39) and prohibited the "evil generation" from entering the Promised Land; Joshua and Caleb were the only exceptions (Deuteronomy 1:35-36). Because of their fear of the Anakim and their rebellion against God, the children of Israel were forced to wander for another 38 years in the wilderness.

During the conquest of Canaan, Joshua expelled the Anakim from the hill country, and Caleb finally drove them out of Hebron completely. However, a small remnant found refuge in the cities of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod (Joshua 11:22). Many Bible scholars speculate that the Anakim's descendants were the Philistine giants David encountered (2 Samuel 21:15-22), including Goliath of Gath (1 Samuel 17:4-7). [GotQuestions.org](#)

All uses of Anakim - Deut. 1:28; Deut. 2:10; Deut. 2:11; Deut. 2:21; Deut. 9:2; Jos. 11:21; Jos. 11:22; Jos. 14:12; Jos. 14:15

Related Resources:

- American Tract Society [Anak, Plural Anakim](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Anakim](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Anakim](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Anak, Anakim](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Anak, Anakim](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Anakim](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Anakim](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Anakim](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Anakim](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Anakim](#)

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22. So Joshua took the whole land. Not absolutely the whole, for in ch. 13:1, the Lord himself is represented as saying to Joshua, 'There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed,' but all the country described here and in the preceding chapter; the greatest and best part of it.

Joshua 11:23 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 divisions by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war.

- **according to all:** Ex 23:27-31 34:11 Nu 34:2-13 De 11:23-25
- **according to their:** Jos 14:1-19:51 Nu 26:52-55
- **the land:** Jos 11:18 14:15 21:44,45 22:4 23:1 Ps 46:9 2Ti 4:7,8 Heb 4:8-9
- [Joshua 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Hebrews 4:8-10 For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. 9 So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. 11 Therefore **let us be diligent to enter that rest**, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.

SUMMATION OF JOSHUA'S CONQUEST AND THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

This chapter concludes with a summary statement of the Book of Joshua, describing first the conquest of the land and then the division of the land.

So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses- In a sentence the writer summarizes Joshua 1-11. As noted below ([note](#)), which Joshua did take the **whole land**, individual Canaanite cities remained to be conquered by the individual tribes.

Campbell comments on **took the whole land** - But how is the statement, "Joshua took the entire land," to be understood when later it was written that "there are still very large areas of land to be taken over"? (13:1) To the Hebrew mind the part stands for the whole. It thus only needs to be demonstrated that Joshua took key centers in all parts of the land to validate the statement that he had conquered the whole land. A. J. Mattill, Jr. has meticulously analyzed the conquest of Canaan by surveying the geographical divisions of the land and the representative parts of it subdued by Joshua ("Representative Universalism and the Conquest of Canaan," Concordia Theological Monthly 35. January 1964:8-17). Included are conquered sites on the coastal plain, the Shephelah (foothills), the central plateau, the Jordan Valley, and the Transjordan plateau. No area was totally bypassed. Joshua did indeed take the entire land, just as God promised he would if he followed the divine Word rather than human wisdom (cf. 1:8). Also see comments on 21:43-45. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

Rod Mattoon - **Joshua took the whole land** which meant he had established a military presence in the land. It did not mean every part was subdued. The enemy was beaten and scattered, but there was still much territory to be possessed. Each tribe of Israel was to apply individually the lessons it learned when the nation was a united army. They were to live by faith individually. In the book of Judges the tribes fail, not because of God's power, but because of a lack of faith and obedience. Today, a Christian must live by faith on his own. He can't grow on the faith of his parents or grandparents. He must walk with God himself. ([Treasures From Joshua](#))

And Joshua gave it for an inheritance ([nachalah](#)) to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes- This description summarizes Joshua chapters 12-22 in which the conquered land was allotted to the tribes.

Thus the land had rest ([shaqat](#); Lxx = [katapauo](#)) from war - Of course this physical **rest** for the land was a pale foreshadowing of the spiritual **rest** for the life that places its faith in the Lord Jesus Christ Who gave the invitation

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 **Take** My yoke upon you and **learn** from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and **YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS**. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Mt 11:28-30+)

Joshua 13:1 reads "Now Joshua was old and advanced in years when the LORD said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and **very much of the land remains to be possessed** (notice it says "**possessed**" not "conquered!")" At first glance this statement in Joshua 13 seems to contradict the statement that "**the land had rest from war.**" The solution is in the fact that Joshua's conquest was over key cities but Israel did not take every city nor did they slay every Canaanite. What they did however was enough to break the Canaanite's power and control over the land. In that sense **the land had rest from war**. This enabled Joshua to portion out the allotments to each tribe, but it was up to the individual tribe to gain final mastery over the Canaanites who remained in the land. In fact in Judges chapters 1-3 we see that after Joshua's death there was still land that had to be conquered by the individual tribes

(e.g., see Jdg 1:3-4+, Jdg 1:8-11ff+).

THOUGHT - Even as Joshua gave Israel rest from war, our Joshua/Jesus gives us rest for our souls (Mt 11:28-30+) and yet there are still many battles to be fought against the "Canaanites" in our "land". And so every believer must daily fight against the "Canaanites" in our life, the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#). Our final and full rest will not come until we are glorified and forever with Jesus.

Related Resources:

- [Rest in the Bible](#)
- Dr Walter Kaiser's excellent summary - The Promise Theme and the Theology of Rest - Bibliotheca Sacra: Volume 130

Utley - "the land had rest from war" This VERB ([shaqat](#) Qal PERFECT) describes the results of Joshua's conquest here and in Joshua 14:15. It also describes the temporary peace brought by the different judges (cf. Jdgs 3:11, 30; 5:31; 8:28). It is not used in Deuteronomy. YHWH desired His covenant people (after the conquest and occupation of Canaan) to be in a restful, happy, fulfilled, covenant state of obedience and abundant peace (cf. Deuteronomy 27-28; 1 Chr. 22:9-10; Isa. 32:17).

Keil and Delitzsch explain that "The taking of the whole land does not imply that all the towns and villages to the very last had been conquered, or that all the Canaanites were rooted out from every corner of the land, but simply that the conquest was of such a character that the power of the Canaanites was broken, their dominion overthrown, and their whole land so thoroughly given into the hands of the Israelites, that those who still remained here and there were crushed into powerless fugitives, who could neither offer any further opposition to the Israelites, nor dispute the possession of the land with them, if they would only strive to fulfil the commandments of their God and persevere in the gradual extermination of the scattered remnants."

Matthews - "Rest" (shaqat) means "to be quiet, have peace," showing that the wilderness wandering is over and the people are free from the sounds of battle (Josh 14:15; Judg. 3:11). Disengagement from their enemies enables them to have a stable and prosperous everyday life. "Resting place" (nuah) is common in Joshua (e.g., 1:13; NIV: "rest"). And the promise of security is being fulfilled (1:13, 15; Deut. 12:9-10). ([Joshua Teach the Text Commentary](#))

Alan Redpath reminds us that "'Much territory was yet to be possessed, but it was left to each tribe to possess what potentially it had received through the conquest of the whole people in which it had taken part. Each tribe was to apply individually the lessons it had learned in united war if it was to possess its inheritance. That the tribes failed to do so was not a reflection on the power of God, but on the failure to take for themselves what Joshua had given and allotted to each one of them.'" ([Victorious Christian Living](#))

William Blaikie - "The annals of peace are always more brief than the records of war; and when we reach this short but welcome clause we might wish that it were so expanded as to fill our eyes and our hearts with the blessings which peace scatters with her kindly hand."

Guzik adds that "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."

THOUGHT In short each believer has to possess his/her possessions which God has promised us in Christ (Eph 1:3+, 2Pe 1:4+, cf Jn 10:10b) and the key to possessing our possessions is the same key used by Joshua's - OBEDIENCE! Trust and obey for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey!

Believer's Study Bible:- Organized resistance from the Canaanites having been eliminated, Joshua was ready to begin dividing the land and assigning to the various tribes the "mopping up" operations. This verse, then, may be called a structural "pivot," looking back and then forward. This first main division of the book concludes with a summary of conquest in ch. 12.

Utley - "So Joshua took the whole land" The book of Judges seems to tell a different story. There were two parts to an effective conquest of Canaan.

1. Joshua defeated the main military forces of the Canaanites and captured or destroyed the major walled cities.
2. Each individual tribe had to possess its allotted land by faith.

The later problems developed because (1) Israel did not kill all of the Canaanites and they reasserted themselves and recaptured some of their old fortresses or (2) the individual tribes never fully finished the task of conquest. There are hints of this failure in Joshua 13 and Judges 1.

Constable - Joshua subdued the whole land (v. 23) in the sense that there were no more pitched battles by the combined Israelite tribal forces following Joshua's conquests. God expected individual tribes to subdue the remaining towns and pockets of resistance from then on (cf. 13:1; Judg. 1:1)....The major war with the Canaanites ended (v. 23), but minor battles and mopping up operations

were still necessary. Not only did the Israelites obtain the land, but they defeated the Canaanite kings and broke their power.

Kitchen - "The error of contrasting Joshua's rapid campaigns (misread as permanent conquest) with slower occupation in Judges 1 misses the point entirely. And how often the proponents of this theory omit even to read Joshua 13! Thirty-one dead kinglets (Joshua 12) were not a conquest in depth, merely a cropping of the leadership. At the end of Joshua's career, there still remained 'very much land to be possessed' (13:1)—both the areas listed (13:2–6) largely unreached by Joshua's vigour, as well as the in-depth settlement of most of the districts already raided. That process was more painfully slow, even in Joshua's lifetime; cf. the remarks in Joshua 18:2–3 (Joshua's rebuke), besides the frustrated efforts recorded here and there (Josh. 15:63; 16:10; 17:12, 16)." (Quoted by Constable)

Henry Sell - "There has never been a greater war for a greater cause. The battle of Waterloo decided the fate of Europe, but this series of contests in far-off Canaan decided the fate of the world." ([Bible Study by Periods](#) online)

Gotquestions.org - During the conquest of Canaan, God intervened miraculously on several occasions, including the day the sun stood still (Joshua 10). Israel was largely successful in defeating or driving out the Canaanites; however, they were not completely successful. Sometimes they left pockets of Canaanites to continue to rule themselves, and sometimes they enslaved the Canaanites (Judges 1). Both of these things had been forbidden by God, who told Israel to drive them out completely (Deuteronomy 7:2). As a result, the Canaanites remaining in the land became a temptation and a snare to the people of Israel. At times Israel would worship the Canaanites' gods, and at times God would allow those remaining pagans to rule over them. The book of Judges tells the story. Today, there are many who find fault with a God who would order "genocide." However, the Bible makes it clear that God was sending Israel into the Promised Land to punish the people who were living there for their wickedness. Certainly God has the right to administer judgment in this way.

Possession (gift, heritage) ([05159](#)) **nachalah** from **nāḥal** = signifies giving or receiving property which is part of a permanent possession and as a result of succession) means Inheritance, heritage, possession. A possession is any piece of property that passes by law to an heir on the death of the owner. It also speaks of God's promises to His people, such as the promise of the land to national (redeemed [remnant](#)) Israel.

Rest (undisturbed)([08252](#)) **shaqat** is a verb which means to cause quietness, to pacify, to allay, to be still, to be quiet, to be undisturbed. Basically the meaning of shaqat is a state of tranquility, as when the land has absence of war (2Chr 20:30). The first use in Joshua is used figuratively to describe that "the land **had rest** (Lxx = [katapauo](#) = to cause something to cease, to cause to be at rest - Heb 4:4, 8, 10) from war." ([see similar uses below of the land having rest or being undisturbed by war](#)) Even in these repeated notices of "rest" in Judges that use the verb shaqat, these periods of "rest" were not the permanent rest promised in the nuah group of words. The same shaqat type is observed in Joshua 11:23 and Joshua 14:15 where the land is given this type of "rest" from war. However it was only a temporary lull in the continuous surge of the restless sea, Isaiah 57:20, a "respite" from days of trouble, Psalm 94:13. This type of rest must be separated from what God calls "My Rest." (Hebrews 3:11, Hebrews 4:3, 5), which supremely is found only in Christ when one believes in Him and rests from his efforts to save himself.

In Ruth 3:18-[note](#) Naomi tells Ruth that Boaz "will not **rest** (Lxx = [hesuchazo](#) = to be at rest)" until he resolves the matter of who is to be the kinsman redeemer. In Isaiah 30:15 we read "For thus the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said, "In repentance and rest you will be saved, In **quietness** and trust is your strength." Sadly the last part of that verse says "But you were not willing!" In Isa 32:17 what brings true security and tranquility reading that that "the work of righteousness will be peace, And the service of righteousness, **quietness** (Lxx = [anapausis](#) = cessation from wearisome activity for the sake of rest) and confidence forever." Thus it is righteousness which brings true tranquility. The tossing sea "cannot be quiet (still, at rest, calm)." (Isa 57:20) **Shaqat** describes people (Israel) "at rest, that live securely" (Ezek 38:11) which speaks of a sense of safety and security.

There is a similar meaning of **shaqat/rest** for the land from disturbance of war in the following passages all dealing with the Promised Land....

Joshua 11:23 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 divisions by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war.

Joshua 14:15 Now the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba; for Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. Then the land had rest from war.

Jdg 3:11 Then the land **had rest** forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

Jdg 3:30; So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land **was undisturbed** for eighty years.

Jdg 5:31 Thus let all Your enemies perish, O LORD; But let those who love Him be like the rising of the sun in its might." And the land **was undisturbed** for forty years.

Jdg 8:28. So Midian was subdued before the sons of Israel, and they did not lift up their heads anymore. And the land **was undisturbed** for forty years in the days of Gideon.

Irving Jensen - A good way to relieve the heaviness of soul induced by the record of bloody and devastating battles is to see afresh the place of the battles in Israel's history from the divine overall perspective. A review of the main aspects of Israel's wars in Canaan focuses attention on three things, namely, their origin, agent, and result.

1. The origin of the wars was God. They were His wars. The man whom Joshua saw with sword in hand at the commencement of the battles was from God (Joshua 5:13). It was God who brought Israel to battle, to purge the land of idolatry. It was God who gave Israel the victory, that she might have a land to dwell in.

2. The agent of the wars was Israel A man, Joshua, and a multitude, the Israelites, were the soldiers and conquerors and executioners, acting in obedience to their Commander-in-chief, God. Whatever they did in obedience to His directives had the unique quality of being holy. This was vividly demonstrated to Joshua, again at the beginning of the wars, when he was told that the ground on which he stood was holy (Joshua 5:15). The land as well as all that was needed for its conquest was holy. If the battles were bloody and desolating, they were holy. If they were many and long, they were holy. God was using the Israelites to purge and punish idolatrous nations, and destruction by war was His chosen method.

3. The result of the wars was rest. The wars were not the ultimate purpose of God. They were to bring in the rest. For there could not have been rest for Israel with idolatrous peoples dwelling in their midst. The phrase in Joshua 11:23 "the land had rest from war" speaks only of rest negatively. Positively, this was the rest of a dwelling place in a homeland, of prosperity both materially and spiritually. It is noteworthy to observe that when God commissioned Joshua to bring Israel into the land (Joshua 1:2-9), the emphasis was on the positive blessings of rest, with only a brief allusion to the conflict aspect of its attainment (Joshua 1:5).

The major spiritual applications for Christian living are derived from the truths described above. God wants the Christian to enter into rest, to prosper spiritually in the rich environment of His daily blessings. The weights and sins which so easily detain and beset the Christian (Heb. 12:1) need to be dealt with and driven out, for there is no rest in their presence. The Christian intent on living in God's blessings will find that such a life comes not without conflict for the simple reason of the presence of the enemies of the soul. But the battle is really God's battle, and the Christian, weak in himself, will find that for faith and obedience to God, God will fight for him, drive out the enemy, give him the victory, and thus let him enjoy the blessings of the rest-land. Rest-living for the Christian is partaking of Christ (Heb. 3:14) and looking to Him (Heb. 12:2). All the rest-land blessings stream from His wounded side. In a real sense Jesus has taken the land of promise for His children by His defeat of Satan on the cross, and the Christian's appropriation of Canaan blessings depends on living in Him, above the storms and safe from the foes. ([Joshua- Everyman's Bible Commentary: Rest-Land Won](#))

Joshua 11:23 Entering Promised Land

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 (Joshua 11:23).

Writing to a new generation after World War 1, Winston Churchill challenged,

"You have not an hour to lose... Don't be content with things as they are. 'The earth is yours and the fullness thereof.' Enter your inheritance; accept your responsibility."

God gave Israel the land of Palestine as their inheritance. He first promised it to Abraham, and He reconfirmed His pledge to others throughout Old Testament times.

In addition to whatever land he owned, the Jewish man would pass on his possessions to his children. Only the priests and Levites owned neither land nor possessions; their inheritance was the Lord.

In the Old Testament, a person had rights to an inheritance only through the death of a parent or relative. Under Roman law of New Testament times, a person became an heir at birth, though he might not receive a full inheritance until a family member died.

In Jesus Christ, the truths about inheritance from both testaments reached their pinnacle: He died that we might enter our inheritance; and He gave us a second birth that we might accept our responsibility

F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily - Joshua 11:23

So Joshua took the whole land,... and Joshua gave it....

This is almost an exact parallel of the words addressed by Peter to the crowds on the day of Pentecost: "Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this." In his representative capacity, as the Head of his Church, and the Forerunner of the great host of the redeemed, it was necessary that Jesus should first receive from God the Father all that spiritual inheritance which He was to communicate to those who should afterwards believe in his name: and having received, He is prepared to give. "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

The whole land of spiritual blessing is now in the hand of Jesus. The prince of this world is cast out. The power of the Anakim is broken. The seven nations of Canaan and all the power of the enemy is under his feet. His are the rivers of the fulness of the Holy Ghost, and his the mountains of fellowship; his the slopes where the vines of Eshcol ripen and the corn of Canaan goldens; his the green pastures and the still waters of communion, as well as the rocky defile of death. Whatever, then, you desire, you must seek at his hand, in whom it is vested for thee, and me, and every believer: and He will give it.

The land had rest from war. Cease, then, from strife. You will not win by sore wrestling. The lame take the prey. Learn to take; let Him cause you to inherit; let Him give according to the division allotted you in the providence and determination of God. "It shall be given to those for whom it is prepared." "They that receive the abundance of grace shall reign."

GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 11](#)

23. Gave it for an inheritance unto Israel. The actual distribution of the land is detailed afterwards.