

## JOSHUA

8. Over what city was the sun standing while the battle was fought?
9. What territory on the South is listed as the southern border of the conquered territory?
10. What city is listed as being on the northern border of the conquered territory?

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 11

- Vv. 1-9 *The defeat of Jabin.* Jabin was the king of Hazor. He formed an alliance with the kings in his area, and they attempted to hold the northern part of Canaan against the on-rushing Israelites. Joshua attacked them near the waters of Merom and completely routed them.
- Vv. 10-15 *The destruction of Hazor.* Joshua was careful to follow the commandments of the Lord explicitly. He completely destroyed the city of Hazor and burned it with fire. He also wiped out the inhabitants so that there would be no remaining cesspool of sin in the land. As for the other kings, he completely overthrew them; but he did not destroy their cities which were walled. The people of Israel were allowed to take spoils in this northern campaign, but they did utterly annihilate the wicked inhabitants.
- Vv. 16-23 *A summary of Joshua's campaigns.* Joshua took all of the land. Every division is mentioned—the hills, the *negeb*, the Jordan River Valley, the Mediterranean plains, and the mountain ranges. In all these areas there was not a single city which sued for peace except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All the rest were destroyed.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *It is foolish to fight God.* The kings of the North should have been able to see that it was foolish to fight against the Israelites. All their neighbors to the south—the king of Jebus, the king of Hebron and the king of Jericho—had been utterly overthrown. A man blinded by sin, however, cannot see what is happening around him. He moves blindly on to his own destruction. Such was the case of the kings of the North.
2. *Righteousness will triumph.* Joshua was fighting a just war. He was wielding the sword of God's wrath because he was involved in fulfilling the Lord's promise to give land to the Israelites. Joshua was invincible. Such will be the ultimate triumph of truth. Jesus said that the gates of Hades could not prevail against His church (Matthew 16:18-20).
3. *No enemy is strong enough to overcome God's people.* Joshua overcame the kings of the South and the kings of the North. There were some very unusual enemies, the Anakims, who lived in the mountains. These people have sometimes been understood to be giants. Even these people fell before the terrible, swift sword of Joshua and the Israelites. It is amazing to see what God's people can do when they are following His leading.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

*The Defeat of Jabin 11:1-9*

And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard those things, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph,

2 And to the kings that were on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of Chinneroth, and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor on the west,

3 And to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and to the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh.

4 And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea-shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many.

5 And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.

6 And the Lord said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.

7 So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them.

8 And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Misrephoth-maim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining.

9 And Joshua did unto them as the Lord bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire.

*1. Who originated the alliance in the North? 11:1*

Jabin, king of Hazor, formed an alliance with the kings of Madon, Shimron, and Achshaph, as well as other kings of the North, to make a common attack upon the Israelites. Hazor was formerly the head of all the kingdoms of northern Canaan (see v. 10). Although Hazor was burned to the ground, it was afterwards restored and

became a capital again. It was fortified by Solomon (I Kings 9:15) and was taken by Tiglath-Pileser (II Kings 15:29). It belonged to tribe of Naphtali. According to Josephus (*Antiquities* V, v., 1), it was above Lake Huleh. Recent archaeological excavations in the area are some of the most interesting of all Palestine.

2. *Where was Chinneroth?* 11:2

Chinneroth was another name for the Sea of Galilee. In New Testament times this Sea was also called the Sea of Tiberias after it was renamed by Tiberius Caesar. The same body of water was also known as Lake Genesseret. The alliance which Jabin formed reached out to include kings as far south as the central part of Canaan.

3. *Where was Dor?* 11:2b

The town of Dor was built by Phoenicians who settled there on account of an abundance of purple mussels. It was allotted to the Manassites but was in the territory of Asher (17:11, cf. 19:26), and taken possession by the children of Joseph (I Chronicles 7:29). The city itself was situated on the Mediterranean Sea, below the promontory of Carmel, and was nine miles north of Caesarea.

4. *Where was Mount Hermon?* 11:3

Mount Hermon is the dominating feature of the landscape of northern Palestine. The mountain lies north and east of the waters of Merom. From its heights one can see without the aid of field glasses all the way to Damascus farther north and to Mount Tabor to the south. Snow lies on the peaks of Mount Hermon during most of the year, and the melting snow provides enough moisture to nourish vegetation. The village which lies at the foot of the mountain is some 2000 feet above sea level and the peak lies some 7000 feet higher. It is not a rocky mountain although there are some bold and majestic masses of naked rock to be seen at various points. Most of the surface is covered with soil and shepherds through the years drove

their flocks almost to its summit in search of good pasture. The territory where it was located was called the land of Mizpeh, a name given to it by Jacob as he parted from Laban (Genesis 31:49).

5. *Where did Jabin get chariots?* 11:4

The fact that the northern Canaanites came to fight with horses and chariots is an indication of the advanced civilization which was found in the North. This was the land of the Hittites, a branch of the Canaanites who were very highly developed in artistic skills. No record is made of the Israelites having such equipment for war. They seemed to fight with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and javelins. It is possible that the northern Canaanites had received their chariots from Egypt (I Kings 10:28, 29).

6. *Where was Merom?* 11:5

These peoples who came out to war were as numerous as the sand by the seashore; and they had very many horses and chariots. All these kings agreed together concerning the war and the place of battle, and they encamped at Merom to fight against Israel. The name *Merom* is like *Meirom*, a village whose name is also found as *Meirum*. It is a celebrated place of pilgrimage among the Jews, because Hillel, Shammai, Simeon ben Jochai, and other noted Rabbis are said to be buried there. About two hours' journey northwest of Safed, upon a rocky mountain, there is a spring which forms a small brook and flows away through the valley below Safed. This stream, which is said to reach the Lake of Tiberias in the neighborhood of Bethsaida, is in all probability to be regarded as the "waters of Merom," according to Josephus (*Antiquities* V, i, 18). These kings encamped at Beeroth, a city of Upper Galilee, not far from Kedesh.

7. *Why did God tell Joshua to "hough their horses"?* 11:6

God told Joshua to make the horses incapable of running fast and pulling the chariots. To hough a horse

was to break the tendons in its lower legs so that it could not run fast. It would still be capable of pulling plows and doing all kinds of domestic work. In this way the horses were spared but were made unfit for military action. The fact that the chariots could be burned indicates that they were made mostly from wood, but they were doubtlessly covered with metal to shield them from spears and javelins.

8. *Why is Sidon called "Sidon the Great"?* 11:8

Sidon is called "the great" (see 19:28), because at that time it was the metropolis of Phoenicia. By the time of David it had lost its ancient splendor and was outstripped by its daughter city of Tyre. It is still to be seen in the town of Saida, a town of five or six thousand inhabitants with many large and well-built houses. The fact that Joshua chased the Canaanites to the far distant point on the Mediterranean Seacoast and to Misrephoth-maim on the east indicates that the campaign was completely successful for the Israelites. Misrephoth-maim was a place with a name which indicated there were slime pits and salt pits in the area. The entire region was flat and marshy. Flat land enabled the northern Canaanites to use their chariots well in their campaigns, but even this advantage in armament did not overcome the men who were doing the will of God.

*The Destruction of Hazor 11:10-15*

10 And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword: for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms.

11 And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them; there was not any left to breathe: and he burnt Hazor with fire.

12 And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded.

13 But as for the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; that did Joshua burn.

14 And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe.

15 As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses.

9. *Why was Hazor utterly razed? 11:11*

Hazor was burned with fire because it was the most important city of the North. Here Jabin had his headquarters. The city had been the rallying point of the Northern Canaanites. When it was destroyed, they would have very little courage to continue their resistance. To burn Hazor was to burn their capital, and its utter destruction symbolized the complete defeat which the northern Canaanites suffered.

10. *Why were some cities spared? 11:13*

The cities which were spared were described as those which stood still in their strength. This may be an indication of the fact that they had not entered into the coalition and had remained at home. The original text, however, indicates that they were cities which were on heights which rose above the plain where the battle was fought. These were probably walled cities and therefore very difficult to take. Joshua did not have time in his campaign to destroy completely all of the cities. This was to be the task of the Israelites who settled the land. It was enough

for Joshua and the men whom he was leading to break the backbone of resistance and to make it possible for the thousands to come in, finish up the conquest, and settle in the Promised Land.

*A Summary of Joshua's Campaigns 11:16-23*

16 So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same;

17 Even from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them.

18 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.

19 There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle.

20 For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses.

21 And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities.

22 There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained.

23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.



11. *Where was Mount Halak? 11:17*

The name of the mountain indicates it was a smooth mountain. Doubtless this is a reference to an area called the Ascent Akrabbim and mentioned in Numbers 34:3, 4 and Joshua 15:2, 3. The area is somewhat north-northeast of Abdah, an area near Wadi el-Marra. Baal-gad, the point farthest north in the notice of the extent of the conquest, was near Mount Hermon. The mention of these two places gives an idea of how extensive the conquest had been. This point is also called Baal-Hermon (Judges 3:3, I Chronicles 5:23). The exact location of the settlement has not been determined.

12. *How long did Joshua wage war? 11:18*

The exact time of the beginning and ending of the conquest is not known. If Moses died about 1407 and Joshua were 80 years old at the time, the entire lifespan of Joshua would reach only to 1377 B.C. We know that Joshua died when he was 110 years of age. Perhaps only about half of his lifetime was spent in his military action, leaving him the latter half of his life for the allotment of the territory to the tribes. Perhaps the conquest took ten or fifteen years. This would indeed be a long war.

13. *Why did the Canaanites not ask for peace? 11:19*

Not a single leader among the Canaanites asked for any mercy except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All the rest of the kings went to war against Joshua. It was the opinion of the writer, as he was moved with divine inspiration to write, that the Lord had hardened their hearts (v. 20). Looking at the situation from the perspective of modern historians, we can agree that it was the Lord's will that these people should be annihilated. They had sinned exceedingly. They were completely reprobate. The freedom of their will was not destroyed, but God had brought them to the place where they had to make a

decision for or against Him. They had been given repeated opportunities to make such decisions, and each time they chose to turn their backs on God. This repeated confrontation contributed to the hardening of their hearts. As we see God doing this, we can say God hardened their hearts. In the final analysis, however, they hardened their own hearts.

14. *Who were the Anakim?* 11:21

The Anakim were descendants of Anak, one of the original inhabitants of the land of Canaan. The children of Israel first met them when the spies went into the land (Numbers 13:22, 33). In the latter reference the statement is made that these sons of Anak came "of the giants." Elsewhere the giants are called Nephilim (see American Standard Translation here and at Genesis 6:4). In the reference to the "giants" in Genesis 6:4 it is said that these were "mighty men which were of old, men of renown." Whether they were large in stature or great in reputation and ability is a question hard to determine. The fact that the spies said they felt like grasshoppers in their sight and that these men looked upon them in the same way does not give the full answer. The ten spies brought up an evil report. It was quite evidently exaggerated. Nevertheless, these people were to be dealt with, and Joshua went against them without hesitation. They centered their activities in the South near Hebron, Debir, and Anab, points in the mountains of Judah and Israel. Joshua utterly destroyed these people leaving only a few in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. These latter points were in the plain which was later known as the Philistine Plain. They would not be hard to deal with in the open territory of the sea-coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and Joshua evidently felt that it was sufficient to drive them out of the center of the territory.

15. *Why are Judah and Israel mentioned separately?* 11:21

The fact that Judah and Israel are mentioned separately does not indicate the book was written after the kingdom was divided in the days of Rehoboam. Judah always had a unique place among the sons of Jacob. Jacob gave him the *barak* and *bekorah*, his blessing and birthright (Genesis 49:8-12). When the children of Israel marched through the wilderness of Sinai on the route to Caanan, Judah marched first. When they began to make their conquest, it was Judah who went up first to battle (Judges 1:1 ff.). Joshua saw that the land was settled before he died, and the entire southern section of the land was given to Judah. His northern border was on a line which stretched west from the north end of the Dead Sea. His southern border went to the extreme limits of the land given to the children of Israel. All of this southern section was given to him. All the rest of the tribes of Israel settled north of Judah and east of the Jordan. In this way Judah was again separated from the rest of the people and it was natural for Joshua to make a reference to the mountains of Judah and the mountains of Israel.

16. *Where were Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod?* 11:22

Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod were leading cities among the Philistines who lived along the plain on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The lords of these towns were especially active during the period of the judges. Samson went down from the hill country of Dan and carried away the posts of the gate of the city of Gaza (Judges 16:1 ff.). Goliath was the famous Philistine from Gath (I Samuel 17:4). When the Ark was captured by the Philistines, it was taken down to the house of Dagon in Ashdod (I Samuel 5:1). Gaza was the southernmost of the towns and quite close to the sea. Gath was the point nearest the center of the land, and Ashdod was the northernmost

and another city near the sea. All of these points were west of the main part of the Promised Land.

17. *Were all the Canaanite towns conquered?* 11:23

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. The conquest was of such character that the power of the Canaanites was broken, their dominion overthrown, and their whole land thoroughly given into the hands of the Israelites. Those who still remained were crushed into powerless fugitives. Moreover, Israel had received the strongest pledge, in the powerful help which it had received from the Lord in the conquests thus far obtained, that the faithful covenant-God would continue His help in the conflicts which still remained. He would secure for Israel a complete victory and the full possession of the Promised Land.

#### TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 11

1. What king led in the northern coalition?
2. What was the capital of the leader of the northern coalition?
3. What unusual equipment of war did the Canaanites in the north use against the Israelites?
4. Near what body of water was the battle fought in the North?
5. How far west did Joshua chase the defeated Canaanites?
6. How far east did Joshua chase the enemy?
7. What city did Joshua burn with fire?
8. What mountain on the south marked the extent of Joshua's conquest?
9. What mountain on the north marked the extent of Joshua's conquest?
10. What mighty men did Joshua drive out of the mountains of Judah and Israel?