

Commander Joshua in the Promised Land • Part 2 - Joshua's Story
Lesson #56 - “Challenges to Control” - [Chapters 11, 12, and 13]
• HANDOUT •

► **This lesson:** Israel's success and reputation spread to the Northern Kings of Canaan. A coalition of the northern kingdoms was quickly formed by Jabin, King of Hazor. This was a larger coalition than the southern coalition had been. Chapter 11 begins by describing this coalition of hostile city-states this way:

“So they went out, they and all their armies with them, as many people as the sand that is on the seashore in multitude, with very many horses and chariots. And when all these kings had met together, they came and camped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel.”

Although Joshua was facing a formidable foe with weaponry far beyond anything Israel had, the Lord assured Joshua not to fear the numbers nor the situation. The Lord would give Israel victory by the next day.

Q: What makes the Northern Coalition so formidable?

Q: What is surprising about this Northern Coalition camped at the waters of Merom?

► After encouraging Joshua, the Lord gives him instructions: Joshua was to hamstring the horses and burn their chariots.

So Joshua took his whole army to the Waters of Merom and overwhelmed the coalition with a surprise attack. Joshua pursued the battle all the way Greater Sidon, to Misrephoth Maim and the Valley of Mizpah on the east, until no survivors were left. Because Joshua did as the Lord directed him regarding the horses and chariots, it remained a hand-to-hand battle.

Q: Why would God order Joshua to disable the horses and burn the chariots? Why would that be the means to victory? Why wouldn't God just throw a few more giant hailstones, like He did before?

Q: Why was it wrong for the Northern Coalition to rely on their superior strength of numbers and their superior weaponry which was evidenced by their chariots and horses? Isn't that what every nation does to keep their people safe?

► King David wrote extensively about the sovereignty of God in the plans of man in Psalm 20.

Three verses from that Psalm are recorded below:

► **Psalm 20:4-7** • May the Lord give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed. We will shout for joy when you are victorious and will lift up our banners in the Name of our God. May the LORD grant all your requests.

Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; He answers from His holy heaven with the saving power of His right hand.

Some trust in chariots & some in horses, but we trust in the Name of the LORD our God.

Israel has now gained general control over Canaan – North & South ...

► Verse 16 makes a surprising summary statement that “Joshua took the entire land.” This is followed by an exact description of all the areas which Israel now had under their control. But we should clearly understand that Joshua did *not* conquer and control every single city in the Promised Land. What Israel did have was the general control rather than complete control of the land. There were some notable exceptions.

For instance, Israel did not have control of the coastal plains. This is the area where the Canaanites mostly used their horses and chariots to maintain their control.

Also, Joshua did not invade the southern coastal land of Philistia, which was made up of five City-States: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron and Gath. This was the stronghold of the Philistines. The Philistines would be a constant thorn in Israel's side, continually harassing them until King David would finally bring them under Israel's control many years in the future.

Q: What was the purpose of stating that Joshua took the entire land, when in fact we know he did not take down every city and/or stronghold?

As part of the summary of victory, an old Nemesis is highlighted ...

► Joshua 11:21-22 • At that time Joshua went and destroyed the Anakites from the hill country: from Hebron, Debir and Anab, from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua totally destroyed them and their towns. No Anakites were left in Israelite territory; only in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod did any survive.

Q: Why is the scripture suddenly giving “spotlight” attention to the Anakites?

Q: What is significant about “Gaza, Gath and Ashdod” being the only area where the Anakites survived?

► Joshua 11:23 • So Joshua took the entire land, just as the LORD had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions.
Then the land had rest from war.

Q: Considering that Joshua had only general control rather than complete control, why does the scripture say that Joshua completed what the Lord had directed him to do through Moses?

Q: There is a profound declaration that follows the Lord fulfilling his covenant with Abraham by giving each tribe a portions of the land as its inheritance. What is it and in what way is it prophetic?

The **profound declaration:**

The **prophetic declaration:**

**With the completion of Joshua 11 we come to the end of Part I of Joshua.
Chapter 12 begins with a series of summaries of accomplishments ...**

► This chapter is a detailed summary list of the kings defeated by Israel. It begins with the the two kings defeated by Moses on the east side of the Jordan, followed by what Joshua accomplished on the west side of the Jordan. This is a summary of everything we have studied through Numbers and Deuteronomy as well as the first section of Joshua.

It also summarizes the distribution of the Land to the tribes on the West side of the Jordan.

Q: Why go through all the details of summarizing what has been stated in prior scriptures?

**Even though the scripture previously declared Joshua had taken control the entire land
Chapter 13 opens with God reminding Joshua that there is land remaining to be conquered ...**

► **Joshua 13:1-7** • When Joshua was old and well advanced in years, the LORD said to him, "You are very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over.

"This is the land that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and Geshurites: from the Shihor River on the east of Egypt to the territory of Ekron on the north, all of it counted as Canaanite (the territory of the five Philistine rulers in Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron--that of the Avvites); from the south, all the land of the Canaanites, from Arah of the Sidonians as far as Aphek, the region of the Amorites, the area of the Gebalites; and all Lebanon to the east, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo Hamath.

"As for all the inhabitants of the mountain regions from Lebanon to Misrephoth Maim, that is, all the Sidonians, I myself will drive them out before the Israelites. Be sure to allocate this land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have instructed you, and divide it as an inheritance among the nine tribes and half of the tribe of Manasseh."

Q: The Lord referred to Joshua as "old and well advanced in years." How old was he?

Q: Scripture has already stated that Joshua had "taken the land." Now God says there is land remaining to be conquered. Is this a contradictory statement with an embedded error?

Q: Is God excusing Joshua from the responsibility of possessing this land because of his age?

Now to the Division of the Land East of the Jordan ...

► **Joshua 13:8** • The other half of Manasseh, the Reubenites and the Gadites had received the inheritance that Moses had given them east of the Jordan, as he, the servant of the LORD, had assigned it to them.

Q: The three tribes which requested they dwell on the east side of the Jordan have received an unusual amount of attention in the scriptural record of the conquest and the division of the land. What purpose does this excessive attention serve?

► Once again the Scripture states that the tribe of Levi would not receive an inheritance. Because they stood with the Lord at Mt. Sinai, when no other tribe would, they were set apart as Holy unto the Lord and given responsibility for the service of the Tabernacle and the Altar.

Their inheritance would come from the offerings made to the LORD, the God of Israel. The notation in this scriptural account, confirms that everything was done for the Levite tribe account to the Lord's Will.

The remainder of Chapter 13 details the exact territory including the respective boundaries given to the three Transjordan tribes.

Chapter 14 focuses on the distribution of the Land on the Western side of the Jordan River as well as Caleb's Inheritance ...



Next Time • Lesson #57

“West Side Distribution & Caleb's Inheritance”

