

Joshua 11 & 12 - Conquest & Remembrance

11:1-14 Conquering the Land, Demolishing Strongholds

11:15-23 Faithful to do All the Lord Commands

12:1-24 Remembering God's Victories, Continuing the Fight

Introduction

- throughout history, various times smaller force winning battle against larger army
- Marathon (490BC), Cannae (216BC), Agincourt (1415AD),
- always amazing, doesn't make sense, typically equate greater numbers with victory
- seems to be something in us also, root for the little guy, underdog
- stuff of books, movies & songs, despite overwhelming odds, smaller group wins the day
- either through training, technology, tactics, good fortune, complacency of larger force
- Israelites though small had ultimate advantage
- God was on their side fighting for them & bringing victory
- while others over the years have made same claim
- actually true for the Israelites, God's cause was their cause & vice versa
- as we've read previous chapters, God miraculously interceded for them
- bringing walls down at Jericho, defeating Ai, making the sun stand still at Gibeon
- generally giving them success in all their battles, as long as they followed & obeyed Him
- words of Joshua's commission, Joshua 1:7-8, *'Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.'*
- key verse, shows importance of reading, meditating on, carefully obeying God's Word
- God desires our success, maybe different than we think, following God's plan, best way

11:1-14 Conquering the Land, Demolishing Strongholds

1 When Jabin, king of Hazor, heard of this, he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph, 2 and to the kings who were in the northern hill country, and in the Arabah south of Chinneroth, and in the lowland, and in Naphoth-dor on the west, 3 to the Canaanites in the east and the west, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites in the hill country, and the Hivites under Hermon in the land of Mizpah. 4 And they came out with all their troops, a great horde, in number like the sand that is on the seashore, with very many horses and chariots. 5 And all these kings joined their forces and came and encamped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel.

6 And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them, for tomorrow at this time I will give over all of them, slain, to Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire." 7 So Joshua and all his warriors came suddenly against them by the waters of Merom and fell upon them. 8 And the LORD gave them into the hand of Israel, who struck them and chased them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim, and eastward as far as the Valley of Mizpeh. And they struck them until he left none remaining. 9 And Joshua did to them just as the LORD said to him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

10 And Joshua turned back at that time and captured Hazor and struck its king with the sword, for Hazor formerly was the head of all those kingdoms. 11 And they struck with the sword all who were in it, devoting them to destruction; there was none left that breathed. And he burned Hazor with fire. 12 And all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua captured, and struck them with the edge of the sword, devoting them to destruction, just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded. 13 But none of the cities that stood on mounds did Israel burn, except Hazor alone; that Joshua burned. 14 And all the spoil of these cities and the livestock, the people of Israel took for their plunder. But every person they struck with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them, and they did not leave any who breathed.

- last chapter, confederation of 5 southern Amorite kings attack city of Gibeon, allies
- God gave victory to the Israelites, made sun stand still, army could the pursue enemy
- Joshua executed the 5 kings, conquered all their cities in the south
- hearing what Joshua and the Israelites did in the south, northern kings are freaking out
- Jabin the king of Hazor in far northern Israel puts the call out far & wide to stop Joshua

- gathers a coalition of northern kings from Jordan valley in east to the sea in the west
- mentioned earlier, normally all be fighting themselves, now united against a common foe
- gathered massive army at waters of Merom (Lake Huleh), north of Sea of Galilee
- numbered more than sand on the seashore, seemingly uncountable
- an absolutely overwhelming force to wipe out these upstart Israelites once & for all
- almost feel sense of fear and desperation, also murderous hatred against God's people
- for Joshua, against massive force bent on your destruction, natural feeling would be fear
- can identify, all know fear, especially now, world permeated by fear, even as believers
- again first thing God tells Joshua is not to fear, God's for them, who can be against them
- promises that the next day God will give Joshua the victory over this army
- Joshua has a choice, give into fear & retreat, or go into battle & trust God
- Joshua hears God's promise, takes God at his word & obeys, trusts God for the victory
- attacks army suddenly, surprise attack, through the Lord's help, totally decimates them
- routs them all the way to the Mediterranean, crippling their horses, burning chariots
- horse & chariot, most advanced military technology of the day, not a problem to God
- Psalm 20:6-7 says, *'Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; he will answer him from his holy heaven with the saving might of his right hand. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright.'*
- Joshua trusted in the name of the Lord that he would save him & he did, gave victory
- Joshua deals with the routed army, comes back deal with the enemy kings & their cities
- takes their cities, kills kings & all their inhabitants
- doesn't destroy all the other cities but utterly destroys & burns city of Hazor, why
- symbol of opposition & defiance of God & his rule & will, can't be allowed to stand
- mentioned earlier the feeling of fear, desperation & hatred from the enemy armies
- this is also the spirit of our enemy, the evil one, Satan
- he knows his destruction is sure & he fears it, hates God & all he has made
- so he desperately rages against God's creation & God's people,
- his goal is to steal, kill & destroy, take as many down with him as he can
- mentioned in a previous message, we are all in a spiritual battle

- whether we are aware or acknowledge it or not, is a reality of the Christian life
- all who believe & follow Jesus are in a battle with the spiritual forces of darkness
- called to stand & fight in God's might & his armour, use the sword of God's word
- account of conquest of Canaan by Joshua, is a record of all God did through him
- also picture of our personal battle against sin in our lives, sanctification by Holy Spirit
- when we believe that Jesus died for our sins & receive him into our life as Lord & Savior
- cross over into promised land God desires for us, new covenant relationship in Jesus
- our sin is cleansed by Jesus' blood shed for us, we are declared righteous before God
- practically in this fallen world, we're not perfectly righteous, we still struggle with sin
- and as mentioned, we are stepping into a spiritual war, battleground hearts & minds
- just as Joshua destroyed the enemy strongholds, God helps us do the same in our lives
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NIV), *'For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.'*
- Satan the tempter, through our weak fallen nature, wants strongholds of sin in our lives
- sinful thoughts pop in your head, entertaining thoughts, footholds grow into strongholds
- not God's desire for us, be dominated by sin, wants us to walk in his light & victory
- gives us the power of his Holy Spirit living in us & the weapons of his word & prayer
- through which we can take every thought captive & make it obedient to Christ
- praise God that he is with us & helps us, through him we can have victory over sin
- at times it feels overwhelming & impossible, with God on our side we can win
- we still fight the battles but in Jesus we fight from a position of ultimate victory
- Jesus has won the war over sin & death through his death & resurrection
- one day we will be with him in heaven & walk in perfect righteousness & sinlessness
- for now in this world we still daily fight the good fight of faith to follow & obey Jesus
- in this life God wants us to flee from sin not to be a killjoy & keep us from having fun
- good Father, loves us, knows sin leads to destruction & death, desires best for us
- God's way & plan for our lives in his promised land is the best one

11:15-23 Faithful to do All the Lord Commands

15 Just as the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

16 So Joshua took all that land, the hill country and all the Negeb and all the land of Goshen and the lowland and the Arabah and the hill country of Israel and its lowland 17 from Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir, as far as Baal-gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. And he captured all their kings and struck them and put them to death. 18 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. 19 There was not a city that made peace with the people of Israel except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. They took them all in battle. 20 For it was the LORD's doing to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, in order that they should be devoted to destruction and should receive no mercy but be destroyed, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

21 And Joshua came at that time and cut off the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua devoted them to destruction with their cities. 22 There was none of the Anakim left in the land of the people of Israel. Only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod did some remain. 23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.

- why did Joshua have success in taking the land?
- God was for him & he was faithful to do all the Lord commanded him through Moses
- simply, he heard the word of God spoken to him & obeyed it, all of it
- he left nothing undone, no partial obedience, which is disobedience
- didn't stop at Jericho or Ai or Gibeon & say that's enough
- he couldn't stop because the enemy didn't stop
- he was in a battle whether he wanted to be or not, same is true for us in our spiritual life
- one of the goals of the Christian life is gaining ground against our battle with sin
- remember Mission Impossible, they're still making movies I think
- started with, "here's your mission should you choose to accept it"
- in our own strength it's mission impossible, with God all things are possible
- sometimes we may wonder why we're not gaining ground and have no victory

- are we as much as we're able, walking in obedience to God's revealed word in our lives
- James calls us to be doers of the word & not just hearers, are we hearing & doing
- these are challenging words, none of us like to hear, sometimes we need to hear it
- another challenging thing in Joshua is the total destruction of the land's inhabitants
- we struggle to read these words in 21st century North America, seems harsh
- passage says God hardened their hearts, that they should be destroyed
- challenging passage, in the bible, we can't shy away from it, couple ways of looking at it
- God directly hardened their hearts to resist the Israelites to fulfil his sovereign purpose
- God is God, his ways are above our ways, he's holy, totally justified & able to do this
- and maybe in his sovereign foreknowledge he knew the Canaanites would never repent
- their hearts would always be hardened to God and resistant to him
- always God is sovereign, always his ways will be accomplished
- the Canaanites were set apart for destruction, so God's holy work could be done
- again picture of sin in our lives, we must be absolutely ruthless with it, not give it an inch
- Jesus has some challenging words on how serious we are be with our sin
- Matthew 5:29-30, "If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell."
- not talking physical mutilation, can pluck out eye & sin with the other one
- our old sinful nature will never submit to God, we must always put the old man to death
- again because God wants the best for us, and wants to give us life not take it away
- sanctifying work of Holy Spirit is a process, not going to happen all at once
- sometimes we don't want to surrender & love our sin & want to hold onto it
- old essay called 'My Heart, Christ's Home', process of surrendering our life to Christ
- need to have God search our hearts & daily surrender to him
- Joshua drove out the Anakim from the central hill country, known as giants
- went to southwest area by sea, future area of Philistines, problems later (Goliath)
- Joshua was faithful to do all he was called to do by God, brought period of peace
- there was still more land to be conquered, always more of the Lord's work to do

12:1-24 Remembering God's Victories, Continuing the Fight

1 Now these are the kings of the land whom the people of Israel defeated and took possession of their land beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise, from the Valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon, with all the Arabah eastward: 2 Sihon king of the Amorites who lived at Heshbon and ruled from Aroer, which is on the edge of the Valley of the Arnon, and from the middle of the valley as far as the river Jabbok, the boundary of the Ammonites, that is, half of Gilead, 3 and the Arabah to the Sea of Chinneroth eastward, and in the direction of Beth-jeshimoth, to the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, southward to the foot of the slopes of Pisgah; 4 and Og king of Bashan, one of the remnant of the Rephaim, who lived at Ashtaroth and at Edrei 5 and ruled over Mount Hermon and Salecah and all Bashan to the boundary of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and over half of Gilead to the boundary of Sihon king of Heshbon. 6 Moses, the servant of the LORD, and the people of Israel defeated them. And Moses the servant of the LORD gave their land for a possession to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

7 And these are the kings of the land whom Joshua and the people of Israel defeated on the west side of the Jordan, from Baal-gad in the Valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, that rises toward Seir (and Joshua gave their land to the tribes of Israel as a possession according to their allotments, 8 in the hill country, in the lowland, in the Arabah, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the Negeb, the land of the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites): 9 the king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one; 10 the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; 11 the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; 12 the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; 13 the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; 14 the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; 15 the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; 16 the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; 17 the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hopher, one; 18 the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; 19 the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; 20 the king of Shimron-meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; 21 the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; 22 the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam in Carmel, one; 23 the king of Dor in Naphath-dor, one; the king of Goim in Galilee, one; 24 the king of Tirzah, one: in all, thirty-one kings.

- chapter 12 is recounting of the various kings God gave victory to the Israelites over
- first under Moses, then under Joshua, you can read the chapter yourselves
- first 2 Amorite kings, Sihon, Og, east of Jordan, defeated by Moses
- grace of God before entering promised land, place to rest before continuing
- God used them as a sign to other nations, show his power & greatness
- same for us, as we allow God to work in us & he provides victory over strongholds of sin
- be living testimonies to the world of his power, glory, righteousness, truth, mercy, grace
- just like the Israelites we often fail, but part of God's will for our lives is our sanctification
- really he just wants a relationship with us, for us to know & love him deeper every day
- just as Joshua gives a recounting & remembrance of the victories of God for his people
- it's also good for us to take time, look back at all of the battles God's won in our lives
- good idea to keep a prayer journal or make notes in your bible of prayer requests
- can go back over later & see and remember the prayers answered & victories won
- helps to encourage us, remember God's faithfulness, see all he has done for us
- strengthens our faith & gives us hope to trust God for future provision & victories
- sometimes as we go forward, healthy to look back see what God has brought us through
- though tempting, can't stay in past, coast on past victories, always new ground to gain
- true personally & individually, also true corporately as a church
- especially relevant as we are in this time of pastoral transition
- critical to take time & look back over the years & celebrate all the Lord has done here
- how God has worked in & through Arrowsmith to impact our community for Christ
- the personal & corporate victories that God brought about in this body
- thankful for the godly teaching & leadership we have had with Pastor's Leland and Eric
- important to know where we've come so we can know where we're going as a church
- just as with the Israelites & in our own lives, not to become complacent in past success
- the battle rages on more than ever, there's always more ground to be taken for the Lord
- there are strongholds in Port Alberni & people's lives, God wants to have victory over
- we look forward in faith, trusting in God's promises & word, his power & faithfulness
- hopeful for the work Christ will do in us & through us, his body, personally & corporately

- Hebrews 12:1-2, *'Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.'*

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