

## Joshua Chapter 11

Verses 1-4: Another set of allied armies came against Israel. Josephus, the secular historian, says that the combined force of the “Canaanites” in this war was 300,000 foot soldiers, 10,000 cavalry and 20,000 chariots. The armies and horses seemed as vast as grains of “sand that is upon the sea shore” (Judges 7:2; 1 Sam. 13:5). The use of “horses and chariots” was a new element in the battle for the land, indicating that Canaan was a formidable foe.

**Joshua 11:1 "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,"**

“Jabin” is apparently a hereditary throne name used by successive kings of “Hazor” (compare Judges Chapter 4). King Jabin led a coalition of kings from several city-states in Galilee and to the west against Joshua, whose victory reports in the south had spread northward.

“Hazor”: Was an ancient Canaanite fortress city in northern Palestine located four miles southwest of Lake Huleh and 10 miles northwest of the Sea of Galilee. Hazor was one of the most important fortresses in the land when Joshua and the Israelites invaded Palestine (verse 10). Hazor was enormous. It had a large population and a strategic location on the main road between Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Jabin, the king of Hazor, was defeated by Joshua and the city was burned (verses 1-14). Later, during the Judges’ period, God allowed the armies of Hazor to oppress Israel for 20 years (Judges 4:1-3). Deborah and Barak defeated Sisera, the captain of the armies of Hazor, and his nine hundred chariots (Judges 4:4-24). The city was allotted to the territory of Naphtali (19:32, 36). During the united monarchy, Hazor assumed a major role as one of Solomon’s chief fortified cities (1 Kings 9:15), along with Gezer and Megiddo. Around 733 B.C., Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria invaded Galilee and captured Hazor (2 Kings 15:29), about 10 years before the collapse of the northern kingdom (in 722 B.C).

"Jabin" means intelligent. This was more of a title than a name. He was head of the Canaanites against Israel. It appears their governments were small and fragmented from the other little nations around them. Israel did not have to fight them all at once, because they had no lasting agreement with each other. With God leading Israel it was not a problem to take on one of these small nations and defeat them. It seems that Jabin was trying to form a group of the people around him to join in and fight Israel. Madon and Shimron are not known of elsewhere in the Bible.

**Joshua 11:2 "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,"**

“South of Chinneroth, and in the valley”: This refers to the deep rift of the Jordan River valley to the south of the Lake of Chinneroth (12:3), later called the Sea of Galilee. Chinneroth was probably a town not far north of the lake. The lowland or foothills are an area somewhat west of the Jordan, toward the Mediterranean Sea. Here also is the plain of Sharon and the heights of

Dor, i.e., foothills extending to Mt. Carmel, nearer the Mediterranean coast and Dor, a seaport city.

These are some more of the small nations or kingdoms that Jabin is trying to get to come in with him to fight Israel. These are from the north, south and west. Chinneroth is one name for the Sea of Galilee. This was in the land of Galilee.

**Joshua 11:3 "[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."**

That is, that particular nation of the seven so called. Part of which dwelt in the eastern part of the land, by the dead sea, and by the coast of Jordan (Num. 13:29). And others dwelt on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, which was to the west of the land.

"And to the Amorite, and to the Hittite, and to the Perizzite": Which were scattered about in several parts of the country.

"And the Jebusite in the mountains": In the mountainous part of Judea, in the mountains about Jerusalem, and which they still inhabited, and did to the times of David.

"And to the Hivite under Hermon, in the land of Mizpeh": So described to distinguish them from the Gibeonites, who were also Hivites. Mizpeh is the place, as Kimchi thinks, where the people of Israel are often said to meet together. Which he supposes they did, on account of the great salvation wrought here in Joshua's time. Hermon was a mountain that adjoined to Lebanon, where it is certain some of the Hivites dwelt (Judges 3:3).

Now we see all of the people that God had promised to give Israel are gathered against Israel. They could all be classed as Canaanites. Each had their own tribal names like Amorite, Hittite, Perizzite, Jebusite, and Hivite.

**Joshua 11:4 "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."**

The several kings and people sent to. These went out from the places they inhabited.

"They and all their hosts with them": The kings of those several places, with their armies.

"Much people, even as the sand that is upon the seashore in multitude": A proverbial expression, to denote an exceeding great number.

"With horses and chariots very many": Being supplied with horses from Egypt, and their chariots were chariots of iron (see Judges 4:3). Josephus gives us the number of this great army, and says it consisted of three hundred thousand footmen, ten thousand horses, and thirty thousand chariots. Some copies read only twenty thousand. And these chariots were armed with iron hooks or scythes, to cut down men as they drove along, and so were very terrible.

All of them together made up a sizable army. They also had many war chariots and horses. We might remember back that Pharaoh had all of this too, and God drowned them in the Red Sea.

**Joshua 11:5 "And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel."**

“Merom”: These copious springs a few miles southwest of Lake Huleh, about 13 miles north from the Lake of Chinneroth, which provided the northern armies a rendezvous point.

The reason they were willing to fight together is, they knew individually they had no chance against Israel. "Merom" means the waters of heights. They will all come against Israel at once.

Verses 6-9: The destruction of the “horses and ... chariots” is important for at least two reasons: (1) God did not want the chariots used against His own people in some future war; and (2) Israel had been commanded never to take horses unto themselves, for they were not to trust in horses or chariots but in God alone (Deut. 17:14-20; Psalm 20:7).

**Joshua 11:6 "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."**

“Hough”: Or hamstring. They cut the large sinew or ligament at the back of the hock on the rear leg, which crippled the horses, making them useless.

Joshua needed encouragement with this large army set to come against them. The horses and chariots in particular made them seem more powerful than they were. Notice God says he will deliver them up slain. The chariots will burn with fire. Perhaps, the reason God wants the horses and chariots destroyed is so Israel will not start depending on them for their own protection.

**Joshua 11:7 "So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them."**

Being encouraged by the Lord, they set out with Joshua at the head of them, to fight the kings and their forces. It is highly probable that these were not the whole body of armed men in the camp of Israel, but a select company Joshua took of them. And who would be able to make quicker marches on this expedition.

"By the waters of Merom suddenly": The Targum is, "they lay by the waters of Merom;" as they were thoughtless and careless, and not on their guard. Joshua and his forces came to them suddenly, unawares, and they not ready for them.

"And they fell upon them": At once, which threw them into disorder and confusion.

It appears from this, that Joshua attacked.

**Joshua 11:8 "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."**

“Great Zidon”: A city on the Phoenician coast, north of Hazor. “Great” may refer to surrounding areas along with the city itself.

“Misrephoth-maim”: This location lay west of Hazor and also on the Mediterranean.

Joshua's army was too powerful for them and they began to run. Joshua's troops followed them unto Zidon, unto Misrephoth-main, and unto Mizpeh and killed all of them.

**Joshua 11:9 "And Joshua did unto them as the LORD bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire."**

Namely, in the following instances.

"He houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire": Not consulting his own worldly interest or that of the people of Israel, but the command of God, which he carefully obeyed. And reserved none for himself or them, as David in another case afterwards did (see 2 Sam. 8:4).

The tendon behind the horse's hoof was cut and left the horses of no use at all. They burned the chariots as well. God was Israel's help and they did not need earthly power.

**Joshua 11:10 "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."**

After the victory was won, Joshua returned to the city of “Hazor” and brought out King Jabin to have him executed. Jabin was made an example for creating this coalition of enemy armies and being a champion of evil.

Hazor was destroyed first because they were the ones who had put this coalition army together against Israel.

**Joshua 11:11 "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."**

Men, women, and children.

"There was not any left to breathe": Any human creature; for as for the cattle they were taken for a prey.

"And he burnt Hazor with fire": As he did Jericho and Ai, though no other cities he had taken. But it seems that this city, though burnt, was built again and inhabited by Canaanites, who had a king over them of the same name with this in the times of Deborah (Judges 4:2).

They killed all the women, the men, and even the children.

Verses 12-15: Joshua "left nothing undone" (1:7) regarding the Lord's instructions. This is how the victories recorded in this book were possible. None of the cities were "burned ... save Hazor only". This was probably done to make a statement about the fate of those who might try to resist Israel's occupation of the land.

A summary of Joshua's northern campaign (11:1-15).

**Joshua 11:12 "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."**

As particularly Madon, Shimron, and Achshaph, with others which he marched unto, after he had burnt Hazor. In which he took their kings, whither they had fled, or else he had taken them before in the pursuit.

"And smote them with the edge of the sword": Both the kings and the inhabitants of those cities.

"And he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded": So that, in doing what he did, he did not indulge a spirit of revenge, cruelty, and greed. But had regard purely to the command of Moses, which was of God (Deut. 7:1).

It appears, that some of the cities Joshua had already destroyed all the people in, had been repopulated with other people. He now burns Hazor with fire to keep this from happening here.

**Joshua 11:13 "But [as for] the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; [that] did Joshua burn."**

Whose walls were not demolished when taken, as Kimchi and Jarchi interpret it. Or that "stood upon their heaps"; upon an eminence, being built on hills and mountains.

"Israel burned none of them": But reserved them for their own habitations. Being well fortified, and having no need of new walls being built to them, or being in a very agreeable situation.

"Save Hazor only, that did Joshua burn": Because it was the chief city where the scheme was formed, and the combination against Israel was made, and was the rendezvous of the confederate forces against them. The Jews have a tradition, that God said to Moses, and Moses said to Joshua, that he should burn it, and that only.

This perhaps means these cities were up on a hill separate from the other cities. They were good look-outs. They would also not be easily re-populated because of their position.

**Joshua 11:14 "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."**

The gold, silver, household goods, corn, wine, oil, or any mercantile goods, together with cattle of every sort. All were taken by them for a prey, for their own use and benefit, which was allowed them.

"But every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe": For which they had warrant so to do from the Lord, as follows.

In many cases, they had killed all of the livestock as well. In this particular case, they had kept the livestock and spoiled the city just killing all of the people.

**Joshua 11:15 "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."**

Joshua's faithfulness to the Lord's will and Moses' directions is constantly underscored (compare verses 12, 20, 23). Joshua's own farewell testimony emphasizes the faithfulness and goodness of God (compare 23:15).

We see from this that Joshua was doing exactly as he had been commanded by Moses to do. God had given these commands to Moses before he gave them to Joshua.

Deuteronomy 4:2 "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish [ought] from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."

Deuteronomy 7:2 "And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, [and] utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them."

Verses 16-17: "Joshua took all that land": The sweeping conquest covered much of Palestine.

"The hills": In the south, in Judah.

"South country": The Negev south of the Dead Sea.

"Goshen": Probably the land between Gaza and Gibeon.

"The valley": Or foothills; refers to an area between the Mediterranean coastal plain and the hills of Judah.

“The valley of the same”: The rift valley running south of the Dead Sea all the way to the Red Sea’s Gulf of Aqabah.

The hill country of Israel is distinct that that in 11:16, lying in the norther part of Palestine. The conquest reached from Mt. Halak, about 6 miles south of the Dead Sea, to Mt. Hermon about 40 miles northeast from the Lake of Chinneroth.

**Joshua 11:16 "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;"**

The whole land of Canaan, described as follows. Both as to the southern and northern parts of it.

"The hills": The hill country of Judea, of which (see Luke 1:39).

"And all the south country": Where lived the five kings; and those of other places, the account of the taking of which we have in the preceding chapter (Joshua 10:40).

"And all the land of Goshen": (See Joshua 10:41).

"And the valley, and the plain": The low places and campaign fields which lay between the hills and mountains. Particularly all the plain and campaign country near Eleuthero-polis, towards the north and west. Jerom says, in his day, was called "Sephela", or "the vale".

"And the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same": By which may be meant Jerusalem, situated on a mountain, and is so called (Ezek. 17:23). And its valley may be the valley of Hinnom or of Jehoshaphat, as they were after called, which were near it. Some think the hill of Samaria or the mountains about that are meant.

**Joshua 11:17 "[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."**

Or the "smooth" and "bald" mountain, which had no trees on it, as some interpret it, observed by Kimchi. It was a mount on the borders of Edom, to which the land of Canaan reached on that side.

"Even unto Baal-gad, in the valley of Lebanon, under Mount Hermon": And so describes the northern part of the land conquered by Joshua.

"And all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them": Both in the southern and northern parts of the land.

He did all of this in obedience to the commands of God.

Deuteronomy 1:7 "Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all [the places] nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

**Joshua 11:18 "Joshua made war a long time with all those kings."**

“War a long time”: The conquest took approximately 7 years (ca. 1405 – 1398 B.C.; compare 14:10). Only Gibeon submitted without a fight (verse 19).

For, though the account of the conquest of them is put together, and lies in a small compass. Yet those victories were not obtained at once, or in a few days, as were those of the five kings, and others, related in the preceding chapter (Joshua 10:10). But were the work of some years. The common notion of the Jews is that Joshua was seven years in subduing the land of Canaan.

The war in the south lasted weeks or perhaps a few months, but the war in the north lasted much longer. Some historians say the taking of their cities took somewhere between 5 and 7 years.

**Joshua 11:19 "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."**

Though, according to the Jews, Joshua, upon his first landing in Canaan, sent letters and messages to all the inhabitants of the land, offering them peace on certain terms. Particularly that he sent three messages, or proposed three things to them. That those who had a mind to flee might flee; that those who were desirous of making peace might make it; and they that were for war, let them fight. All were for the last, and so perished.

"Save the Hivites and the inhabitants of Gibeon": These, some have thought, did not hear of the offers of peace, others think they did. And at first rejected them, but repenting were obliged to take the crafty methods they did to obtain it. Of which see (Joshua 9:1).

"All other they took in battle": Refusing to submit to them and make peace with them.

The cities all had to be taken by force, except the Hivites who tricked Joshua into accepting them as servants of Israel. Gibeon was the main city that was saved.

**Joshua 11:20 "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."**

“It was of the LORD to harden their hearts”: God turned the Canaanites’ hearts to fight in order that Israel might be His judging instrument to destroy them. They were willfully guilty of rejecting the true God with consequent great wickedness, and were as unfit to remain in the Land as vomit spewed out of the mouth (Lev. 18:24-25).



In order for Israel to settle in the land and be the nation God intended them to be, all pagan and evil influences had to be eradicated. God's people often must engage in battle to take full possession of what God has promised. Today, this takes the form of spiritual warfare, fighting against the devil's schemes to undermine God's work (Eph. 6:10-18).

God's wrath was against them, as it had been against Pharaoh of Egypt. In both instances, God hardened their heart and then destroyed them. God had planned to give this land to Israel for their Promised Land. The people were not followers of God, so He destroyed them and gave the land to Israel.

**Joshua 11:21 "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."**

"Anakims": Enemies who dwelt in the southern area which Joshua had defeated. They descended from Anak ("long necked"), and were related to the giants who made Israel's spies feel small as grasshoppers by comparison (Num. 13:28-33). Compare also Deut. 2:10-11, 21. Their territory was later given to Caleb as a reward for his loyalty (14:6-15).

The Anakims had been going back and taking over the cities that Joshua had already defeated. Now Joshua goes in and destroys the Anakims. "Anakims" means long necked men.

**Joshua 11:22 "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."**

"Anakims ... Gath": Some of them remained in Philistine territory, most notably those who preceded Goliath (compare 1 Sam. 17:4).

The "Anakim" were the giants the 12 spies saw in the land (Num. chapters 13-14). Just as Joshua and Caleb predicted, God enabled the Israelites to conquer these mighty men so they could claim the land He had promised them.

"Gath" was one of the five chief cities of the Philistines (Judges 3:3), located on the coastal plain in southern Palestine (13:3). Like Ashdod, it was one of the remaining homes of the Anakim (giants; compare verse 22; 2 Sam. 21:22). Its precise location remains uncertain. The city is mentioned twice in stories about the Ark of the Covenant (1 Sam. chapters 4 to 6; 2 Sam. chapter 6). The Philistine inhabitants of Ashdod sent the Ark to Gath (1 Sam. 5:8; 6:17; 7:14). Gath was also the home of Goliath the Philistine (1 Sam. 17:4, 23). David befriended Achish, the king of Gath, during the days when he fled from King Saul (1 Sam. 27:2-12). David captured Gath (1 Chron. 18:1; 2 Chron. 26:6), during his reign. The residents of Gath, known as Gittites, were still subject to Israel during Solomon's reign, although they had their own king (1 Kings 2:39, 42). Solomon's son, Rehoboam, fortified Gath (2 Chron. 11:8), but the city returned to the hands of the Philistines. Later, Hazael recaptured Gath (2 Kings 12:17), and Uzziah broke down its walls (2 Chron. 26:6).

“Ashdod” was one of the five principal Philistine cities (1 Sam. 6:17), situated three miles from the Mediterranean coast and 18 miles northeast of Gaza. The city’s military and economic significance was enhanced by its location on the main highway between Egypt and Syria. Some of the Anakim were found there in the days of Joshua (verse 22), and the inhabitants were too strong for the Israelites at that time. It was among the towns assigned to Judah, but was not occupied by them (13:3; 15:46). Ashdod was still independent in the days of Samuel, when, after the defeat of the Israelites, the Ark was taken to the house of Dagon in Ashdod (1 Sam. 5:1). There is no report that it was occupied by David, although he defeated the Philistines many times. Likewise, no definite knowledge exists that it was ever subdued by Judah before the time of Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:6). The prophet Amos predicated the destruction of the city because of its inhumane treatment of the Israelites (Amos 1:8; 3:9). Zephaniah (Zeph. 2:4), refers to the desolation of Ashdod, and Zechariah (Zech. 9:6), to its degraded condition. It continued to be inhabited, however, for Jews intermarried with women of Ashdod after the return from Babylon (Neh. 13:23).

There was a remnant of these giant people who lasted even until the time of David, because Goliath was a giant over 9 feet tall. There was just a handful of giants left. They were almost annihilated in the time of Joshua here. Gaza was a stronghold of the Philistines. Gath and Ashdod were too.

**Joshua 11:23 "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."**

“The whole land”: Here is a key verse for the book which sums up (11:16-22). How does this relate to (13:1), where God tells Joshua that he did not take the whole land? It may mean that the major battles had been fought and supremacy demonstrated, even if further incidents would occur and not every last pocket of potential resistance had yet been rooted out.

The chief resistance of the entire land was now broken. Further conflict with the Canaanites would yet continue for some time (compare 23:29-30; Deut. 7:22; Judges 2:20-23). The land resting periodically from war will form a major theme in the Book of Judges.

They took the entire Promised Land as God had commanded them to do. Joshua divided it up among the tribes as God had told him to do. This does not mean that he had killed every single person in opposition to Israel. It just means they were in total control of the land of promise. They cast lots to determine who got what piece of land. We remember, the Levites got cities instead of land. All the other tribes got their allotted land. There was no more war, because the few people left greatly feared Israel's God.

## **Joshua Chapter 11 Questions**

1. Who was king of Hazor?

2. What does "Jabin" mean?
3. This was more of a \_\_\_\_\_ than a \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What was Jabin trying to do, beginning with verse 1?
5. Chinneroth is another name for the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
6. What small nations could all be classified as Canaanites?
7. What two things did the Canaanite armies have that Israel did not?
8. Where did they meet to fight against Israel?
9. What does "Merom" mean?
10. What made these armies seem powerful to Joshua?
11. What does "hough" mean?
12. What will God do to their chariots?
13. Where did they run toward?
14. What, exactly, did Joshua's men do to the horses?
15. Why was Hazor destroyed?
16. Why did Joshua and his army kill all of the people?
17. In verse 14 the Israelites were allowed to take what?
18. What is meant by "long time" in verse 18?
19. Which was the only city that made peace with Israel?
20. What did God do to these people to cause them to fight Israel?
21. What does "Anakims" mean?
22. How tall was Goliath?
23. Gaza was a stronghold of the \_\_\_\_\_.
24. How was the land divided?