

Joshua Chapter 12

Verses 1-24: This detailed list of the 31 “kings” the Israelites defeated” is historical verification that the Israelites were able to conquer all their enemies, through the power of God and according to the promises of God.

“The kings ... Israel smote”: The actual list of 31 kings conquered (verse 24), follows and fills out the summary of “all the land” in (11:16-17, 23). The roster shows the kings whom “Moses defeated” east of the Jordan earlier (verses 1-6; compare Num. chapter 21; Deut. 2:24 – 3:17); then those whom Joshua conquered west of the Jordan. A summary (verses 7-8); central kings (verse 9); southern kings (verses 10-16); and northern kings (verses 17-24).

Joshua 12:1 "Now these [are] the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the river Arnon unto mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east:"

In the days of Moses, as Jarchi remarks, and as it clearly appears from what follows.

"And possessed, their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun": On the east of the land of Canaan.

"From the river Arnon unto the mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east": Arnon was the border of Moab between them and the Amorites (Num. 21:13). And from hence to Hermon, a mountain adjoining to Lebanon, lay the country of the two kings of the Amorites after mentioned (Deut. 3:8). And the plain on the east were the plains of Moab, which lay to the east of Jordan.

The list of conquered kings (in chapter 12), forms a logical expansion (of the closing verses of chapter 11).

Joshua is about to give a complete description of the kings they had conquered, and the lands they had possessed. This first mention is of the kings and their lands on the eastern side of Jordan. The land on the eastern side of Jordan you remember, was given to Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. This was a beautiful land for grazing animals. The lands on the east side of Jordan had been ruled by the giants Og and Sihon. The land was bordered on the west by the Jordan River. It reached from the river Arnon to Mount Hermon.

Joshua 12:2 "Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, [and] ruled from Aroer, which [is] upon the bank of the river Arnon, and from the middle of the river, and from half Gilead, even unto the river Jabbok, [which is] the border of the children of Ammon;"

Which he took from the Moabites, and made his capital city (Num. 21:2).

"And ruled from Aroer, which is upon the bank of the river of Arnon": A city of Moab, which never fell into the hands of Sihon, and therefore he is said to rule from it but not over it.

"And from the middle of the river": That is, the river Arnon, which being the boundary of the Moabites and Amorites, the king of the Amorites might be said to rule from the middle of it.

"And from half Gilead even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon": So it is said to be (Deut. 3:16). It should be rendered, not "from half Gilead", but "and half Gilead", as it is in the Hebrew text, and so in the Targum. For half Gilead belonged to the kingdom of Sihon, as the other half did to the kingdom of Og. As in (Joshua 12:5); and so Jarchi remarks.

Numbers 21:23-24 "And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel." "And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon [was] strong."

Joshua 12:3 "And from the plain to the sea of Chinneroth on the east, and unto the sea of the plain, [even] the salt sea on the east, the way to Beth-jeshimoth; and from the south, under Ashdoth-pisgah:

Or rather, "and the plain". The plains of Moab, which, before possessed by the Israelites, belonged to the kingdom of Sihon. And the plains of Jordan, which reached;

"To the sea of Cinneroth on the east": The same with the lake of Gennesaret, and sea of Tiberias, mentioned in the New Testament (Matt. 14:34).

"And unto the sea of the plain": Where stood the cities of the plain, Sodom, Gomorrah, etc.

"Even the salt sea on the east": The same with the Dead Sea, into which the plain the above cities stood on was converted.

"The way to Beth-jeshimoth; which was a place in the plains of Moab (Num. 33:49).

"And from the south under Ashdoth-pisgah": Or the springs of Pisgah, which flowed from the mount of that name (Deut. 3:17).

Chinneroth is the same as the Sea of Galilee, and the Salt Sea is the same as the Dead Sea. These are extremities of the eastern side of the territory. Beth-jeshimoth is speaking of the desert area near the Dead Sea. "Beth-jeshimoth" means house of desolations. It perfectly describes this area, even today. Pisgah was the mountain you could stand on and see the Promised Land. This was the mountain Moses climbed to get his view of the Promised Land. It was actually across from Jericho.

Joshua 12:4 "And the coast of Og king of Bashan, [which was] of the remnant of the giants, that dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei,"

The country that he reigned over, who was another king of the Amorites. Smitten by Israel in the times of Moses.

"Which was of the remnant of the giants": (see note at Deut. 3:11).

"That dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei": Of which two places see (Deut. 1:4). It seems as if Og had a palace in each of those cities, and sometimes was at one and sometimes at another, as is usual with kings.

Ashtaroth was a very evil city worshipping the stars. Og was one of the last kings of the giants. They were defeated by Moses.

Joshua 12:5 "And reigned in mount Hermon, and in Salcah, and in all Bashan, unto the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and half Gilead, the border of Sihon king of Heshbon."

That is, over all the people that inhabited that mount or dwelt under it (Joshua 11:17). And adjacent to it, of which mountain (see notes on Deut. 3:8-9).

"And in Salcah": Which was a city belonging to the kingdom of Og (Deut. 3:10).

"And in all Bashan": Or Batanea, a country famous for pasturage (Micah 7:14), and for fat cattle, (Ezek. 39:18), and for oaks (Isa. 2:13), frequently mentioned in Scripture.

"Unto the border of the Geshurites, and the Maachathites": Which were two nations the Israelites never expelled (Joshua 13:13; see Deut. 3:14).

"And half Gilead": Which belonged to Og. As the other half did to Sihon, before observed, which was as follows.

"The border of Sihon king of Heshbon": Here the two kingdoms joined, even in the midst of Gilead, which was divided between them. But now wholly fell into the hands of Israel.

The Geshurites were on the north-east corner of Bashan. They bordered on Aram. They were located east of Jordan. The Maachathites were the inhabitants of a small kingdom near Palestine. Some of these warriors joined Israel's army. The Geshurites and the Maachathites are mentioned in the time of David, so they are not annihilated here.

Joshua 12:6 "Them did Moses the servant of the LORD and the children of Israel smite: and Moses the servant of the LORD gave it [for] a possession unto the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh."

That is, the inhabitants of those kingdoms they smote with the edge of the sword, and took possession of them. The history of which see in (Num. 21:1).

"And Moses the servant of the Lord gave it": The whole dominion of the two kings before mentioned.

"For a possession unto the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh": Of which grant, and the conditions of it (see Num. 32:1).

On the eastern side of Jordan Moses was still in charge. The lands we mentioned in the previous verses here were all east of Jordan. These were the lands that were such good lands for livestock that Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh received. They had to go and help the other tribes fight for their land on the west side of Jordan, but the LORD gave them time to settle their families here before going over the Jordan River.

Joshua 12:7 "And these [are] the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon even unto the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir; which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel [for] a possession according to their divisions;"

After particularly named (Joshua 12:9).

"Which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west": That is, on the west of Jordan.

"From Baal-gad, in the valley of Lebanon, even unto the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir": Of which see (Joshua 11:17).

"Which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel": For a possession.

"According to their divisions": As after related in this book.

Moses died and was buried on the eastern side of the Jordan River. Joshua took over in His place and led their people across the Jordan River to their Promised Land. We remember the lands are divided by lot after they have won the land from its inhabitants. This is their inheritance from God. Baal-gad was a city at the foot of Mount Hermon. This borders Lebanon. Seir is the area of the Dead Sea.

Joshua 12:8 "In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the springs, and in the wilderness, and in the south country; the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites:"

Which is a description of the whole land of Canaan. Some parts of which were hills and mountains, others vales and level fields. Others were dry and barren, and others well-watered. Some part of it lay to the north, as towards Lebanon, and others to the south, towards Seir.

"The Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites": Which were the nations that inhabited the land of Canaan before it was taken and possessed by the Israelites.

This is a list of the people who were living there before the LORD had Joshua to take it for Israel. These were people who knew not God.

Joshua 12:9 "The king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which [is] beside Beth-el, one;"

Who was first taken, and so named first (Joshua 6:21).

"The king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one": Who was next taken and though Beth-el was so near Ai, it had a king of its own, after mentioned (see Joshua 7:1).

In the previous lesson, we got into the details of the overthrow of these kings and their lands. The kings were killed and most of the cities burned. There were many more cities than the ones listed here. These are some of the cities that were centers. Jericho and Ai were two of the more prominent cities.

Joshua 12:10 "The king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one;"

Whose name was Adoni-zedek, and was one of the five kings taken and hanged (Joshua 10:1).

"The king of Hebron, one": Another of the five kings, whose name was Hoham (Joshua 10:3).

Joshua 12:11 "The king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one;"

Whose name was Piram, a third of the five kings before observed (Joshua 10:3).

"The king of Lachish, one": Another of them, whose name was Japhia (Joshua 10:3).

Joshua 12:12 "The king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one;"

The last of the five kings, and his name was Debir (Joshua 10:3).

"The king of Gezer, one": Who came up to help Lachish, and his name was Horam (Joshua 10:33).

Joshua 12:13 "The king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one;"

The same with Kirjath-sepher, of which place (see Joshua 10:38).

"The king of Geder, one": Jerom seems to confound this with the tower of Eder, beyond which Jacob pitched his tent (Gen. 35:21). And he speaks of a Geder in the tribe of Judah, in his time a village belonging to the country about Aelia or Jerusalem. And of Gahedur in the tribe of Judah, a large village, ten miles from Diospolis or Lydda, as you go to Eleuthero-polis. It seems to be the same with Gederah (Joshua 15:36), or Gedor (Joshua 15:58).

Joshua 12:14 "The king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one;"

Hormah, and Arad were cities in the Negeb. This was a very dry area, bordering Edom.

Which was formerly called Zephath (Judges 1:17; see Joshua 15:3).

"The king of Arad, one": Perhaps the same with Arath, which, Jerom says, is the border of the land of Judah (see Num. 21:1).

Joshua 12:15 "The king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one;" This would later be associated with the Philistines.

Taken at the same time as the kings of Makkedah, Debir, and of other places were (Joshua 10:29).

"The king of Adullam, one": A city in the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:35). Jerom says there was a village in his time, not a small one, called by this name, ten miles to the east of Eleuthero-polis. Near to this place was a cave where David hid himself when he fled from Saul (1 Sam. 22:1; see notes on Micah 1:15).

Joshua 12:16 " The king of Makkedah, one; the king of Beth-el, one;"

In a cave near to which five kings hid themselves, and were taken out and hanged, and the city afterwards was taken by Joshua (Joshua 10:16). Which fell to the lot of the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:41).

"The king of Bethel, one": A city near to Ai, about a mile from it, and yet had a king over it. It was taken at the same time that Ai was (Joshua 7:2). And fell to the lot of Benjamin (Joshua 18:22).

Joshua 12:17 "The king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hopher, one;"

Which Jerom calls Thaffu. It signifies an apple, and perhaps had its name from plenty of that fruit that grew there. A city of this name fell to the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:34). Where also was another place called Beth-tappuah (Joshua 15:53). And both different from another Tappuah on the border of Manasseh, which belonged to the tribe of Ephraim (Joshua 17:8). By some thought to be meant here.

"The king of Hopher, one": Mention is made of Gittah-hepher as on the border of Zebulun (Joshua 19:13). The same with Gath-hepher, of which place was the Prophet Jonah (2 Kings 14:25). And of the land of Hopher in (1 Kings 4:10). Which is said by Jerom to be in the same tribe, and not far from Diocaesarea or Zip-pore. And we read of a Chepher or Hopher in the Jewish writings, which, according to the account of it there given, could not be far from the same place, at least it must be less than twelve miles from it.

Joshua 12:18 "The king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one;"

There was a place called Aphekah in the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:53). And an Aphek that was on the border of the Amorites (Joshua 13:4). And another in the tribe of Asher (Joshua 19:30). But Andrichomius places this Aphek in the tribe of Issachar, whose king Joshua smote, and takes it to be the same place where the Philistines in the times of Samuel and David brought their armies against Israel (1 Sam. 4:1). And where the king of Syria fought against Israel (1 Kings 20:26). And says that its ruins were now shown in the great plain not far from Gilboa to the east of Mount Carmel, and five miles from Tabor.

"The king of Lasharon, one": Which, according to the Vulgate Latin version, is the same with Saron, which (in Acts 9:35), in some copies is called Assaron. So Andrichomius, who places it in the tribe of Ephraim, and takes it to be the same Sharon Isaiah speaks of (Isa. 33:9). And of which Jerom says, to this day there is a country between Tabor and the lake of Tiberias called Saronas, and also that from Caesarea of Palestine to the town of Joppa, all the land that is seen bears that name.

Joshua 12:19 "The king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one;"

Whose name was Jobab (Joshua 11:1).

"The king of Hazor, one": Whose name was Jabin, and of him and his city (see Joshua 11:1).

Joshua 12:20 "The king of Shimron-meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one;"

See (Joshua 11:1), this place fell to the tribe of Zebulun (Joshua 19:15).

"The king of Achshaph, one": See (Joshua 11:1); this city fell to the lot of Asher (Joshua 19:25).

Joshua 12:21 "The king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one;"

It was in the tribe of Manasseh (Joshua 17:11). Jerom says in his time it was a large village, distant from Legion on the plain of Esdraelon three miles.

"The king of Megiddo, one": Which belonged to the same tribe (Joshua 17:11). Near this place were some waters where the Canaanites fought with the Israelites (Judges 5:19). And a valley where Josiah was slain (2 Chron. 35:22).

Megiddo is in the area where the battle of Armageddon will be fought in the end days.

Joshua 12:22 "The king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam of Carmel, one;"

Which afterwards fell to the tribe of Naphtali, and was one of the cities of refuge (Joshua 19:37). It was situated in upper Galilee on Mount Naphtali, four miles from the city of Sephet, and as many from Capernaum, and twenty miles from Tyre.

"The king of Jokneam of Carmel, one": A city that came to the lot of the tribe of Zebulun (Joshua 19:11). And was given to the Levites (Joshua 21:34). It was not far from Mount Carmel, from whence it is described.

Joshua 12:23 "The king of Dor in the coast of Dor, one; the king of the nations of Gilgal, one;"

Of which (see Joshua 11:2). It fell to the lot of Manasseh, but never was possessed by them. As were not Taanach and Megiddo, before mentioned (Joshua 17:11; Judges 1:27).

"The king of the nations of Gilgal, one": Not the place where Joshua encamped after he had passed Jordan, for that was then no city. The Septuagint version renders it the land of Galilee.

Gilgal was the plain of Jordan.

Joshua 12:24 "The king of Tirzah, one: all the kings thirty and one."

The mention of numerous kinglets in Canaan at this time is confirmed by the Amarna Tablets, in which many of the same names occur.

The conquest of all these kings, covering areas up and down the "whole land" (11:23), was due to the Lord's faithful help, which fulfilled His Word. God promised the Land in His covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12:7), and reaffirmed that He would give success in conquest (Joshua 1:3, 6).

In this group, there are 31 kings killed. You can see by all of these divisions that they would have not been as strong as they would have been if they were one nation. There are many more cities taken. These are mentioned specifically because they were the primary city in their area. Many of the other cities Israel does not burn. They do kill most of the people however.

Joshua Chapter 12 Questions

1. What is Joshua doing, beginning with verse 1?
2. These first few verses are on which side of Jordan?
3. Who was the land on the eastern side of Jordan given to?
4. Who had this area been ruled by?
5. This area was bordered on the west by the _____.
6. Sihon was king of the _____.
7. What did Sihon refuse Israel?

8. What were the results of this battle?
9. Chinneroth is the same as what?
10. The Salt Sea is the same as the _____ Sea.
11. "Beth-jeshimoth" means what?
12. What mount did Moses go on to see the Promised Land?
13. Who were the remnants of the giants?
14. The Geshurites were on the north east corner of _____.
15. Some of the _____ warriors joined Israel's army.
16. On the eastern side of Jordan, _____ was still in charge.
17. Why did Reuben want the land on the east of Jordan?
18. What requirement was made of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh to receive the land east of Jordan?
19. Where was Moses Buried?
20. Who took his place?
21. How were the lands divided?
22. Who were the people who previously owned the land of promise?
23. What were two of the more prominent cities destroyed?
24. What is Megiddo well known for?
25. How many kings, listed here, died?