

Joshua 11–17

Day 1

Kings of the North. Read Joshua 11

1. How did the kings of the land to the north react to the Israelite victories (11:1–3)? What does the extensive description of the kings, cities, regions, and people of the land indicate about the force coming against Israel?

- What things made this army intimidating (11:4–5)? How do you think Israel would have felt if this had been the first army they had come up against after crossing the Jordan?

FYI: Chinneroth/Kinnereth. “This was an older name for the Sea of Galilee and for one of the towns on its shore. The Jebusites were in and around Jerusalem, whereas Hermon was a mountain in the northern edge of Canaan. This northern confederation thus covered a wide geographical range and many city states.”
– The Defenders Study Bible

“The challenges brought to Israel seem to increase at each step, from Jericho, to Ai, to the battle with the southern kings, now to this battle.”
– David Guzik

2. How did the Lord reassure Joshua about this battle (11:6a)? Why do you think Joshua may have needed a fresh reminder?

- What directions did the Lord give Joshua (11:6b)?

3. In the following, what did the Lord say to Israel about relying on horses and chariots?

- Psalm 33:16–18

- Isaiah 31:1

4. From 11:7–9, list the ways that Israel was involved in the battle.

5. What did the Joshua do differently with the city of Hazor (11:10–13)? Why?

FYI: Hazor. Archaeological studies have shown that Hazor was indeed the largest and strongest of the Canaanite cities at this time...Hazor, along with Jericho and Ai, were the only cities destroyed by Joshua. The other conquered cities were simply taken over and occupied by the Israelites. (Joshua 11:13–14). Archaeological evidence has indeed confirmed that Hazor was destroyed and burned at a time corresponding to Joshua’s invasion of Canaan.”
– The Defender’s Study Bible

Pictures of Hazor: <https://www.bibleplaces.com/hazor/>

6. What plunder did the Israelites take (11:14)? Compare 8:2.

7. What comparison was made about Joshua (11:15)? See Exodus 40:16.
 - How extensive were the wars with these kings (11:16–19)?

Map: “Joshua’s Northern Campaign” <https://ibiblemaps.com/joshua-northern-campaign-canaan/>

FYI: “The staggering completeness of the destruction (especially in human terms) shows us the completeness of God’s judgment, Israel’s obedience, and the depravity of the Canaanites.”

– David Guzik

“Many...have charged Joshua (and God) with unnecessary cruelty and bloodthirstiness, for visiting such utter destruction on all these Amorites (or Canaanites). But it should be remembered that they had already had many centuries to repent of their extreme wickedness and cruelty (note Genesis 15:16), and had only grown worse. It was merciful for God to command their destruction before they could (as they would, and did) contaminate others.”

– The Defender’s Study Bible

8. What does 11:19 indicate about the hearts of the people of Canaan?
 - What action did the Lord take against them because of this attitude (11:20)? Where do you see **mercy** to the rest of mankind in their destruction? Do you see any correlation to Noah’s flood?

FYI: “The hardening of men’s hearts is when God gives man up to the sin that is in his heart (Romans 1:24–28).”

– David Guzik

“God’s judicial hardening is not presented as the capricious manipulation of an arbitrary potentate cursing morally neutral or even morally pure beings, but as a holy condemnation of a guilty people who are condemned to do and be what they themselves have chosen.”

– D. A Carson

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/you-asked-does-god-harden-a-believers-heart/>

9. What group of people did Joshua also destroy (11:21) from the land of Israel? Where did they remain (11:22)?

10. List what you learn about the Anakim (11:22), Nephilim, and Rephaites.

The Anakites	The Nephilim	The Rephaites
Deuteronomy 1:28, 9:2	Numbers 13:32–33, Genesis 6:4–6	Deuteronomy 2:10–11; 3:11; 2 Samuel 21:15–16, 18–22

11. From what you learned above, why do you think victory over the Anakim was given special recognition? How many were eliminated (11:22)?

FYI: “All the giant **Anakims**, who had so frightened the earlier generation of Israelites (Numbers 13:31–33), were as easily defeated by Joshua as the other Canaanites, with the exception of those along the lower seacoast, nearest Egypt.

Gath was one of just three cities where some of the families of giants among the Anakim survived, and it was from Gath that Goliath, the giant killed by David over three hundred years later, had come (I Samuel 17:4).”
– The Defender’s Study Bible

12. What great promises did God fulfill through Joshua (11:23)?

- ✎ Applying the Word:** Think of a time when you have been obedient to the Lord in spite of ongoing difficulties. What happened? How did others benefit?

Day 2

Defeated Kings; Apportioning the Land. Joshua 12–13

13. From the list of kings defeated east of the Jordan (12:1–6) and west of the Jordan (12:7–24), what impression does it give of the magnitude of the victories that Israel had? What purpose do you think the details of this list served for future generations?

- Who took possession of the land east of the Jordan (12:6)?

14. As Joshua was growing old, what problem remained (13:1–5)?

- What did God say He would do (13:6a)?
- What was Joshua to do (13:6b–7)?

Digging Deeper

See what is said about old age and serving the Lord in Psalm 71:17–18; 92:12–15.

FYI: “Each tribe was responsible to possess their own land completely. God emphasizes the idea of personal responsibility and initiative...We are blessed by personally taking responsibility and initiative in trusting God to do what He has called us to do.”
– David Guzik

15. Who had already allotted the land east of the Jordan (13:8)? Which two-and-a-half tribes had received this land?
- Who is given credit for conquering this land (13:12b)? Crossref. 12:6.
16. What problem remained even east of Jordan (13:13)? (See also 15:63; 17:12–13, and Judges 1:28.)
17. What was different about the tribe of Levi (13:14,33)?
- In Deuteronomy 18:1–5, how is their inheritance described?
 - How is our inheritance in Christ described in Ephesians 1:11 and Colossians 1:12?
18. According to Nehemiah 13:10–11, what happened generations later?

Levi 13:14; Reuben 13:15–23; Gad 13:24–28; Manasseh 13:29–32

19. How was the land given out to each tribe? 13:15,24... (See the details of this process given in Numbers 33:54.)
20. What reasons do you see for God establishing the Israelites in the land of Canaan?
e.g., to thrive and grow, protection from other cultures, located at the crossroads of the world...
21. What benefit would the nation be for all nations?
- Genesis 12:3
 - Exodus 19:6
 - Deuteronomy 4:5–8
 - 1 Kings 8:60

✂ **Applying the Word:** If you were to write out a list of victories that God has given you over personal battles, what are some things it would include? (Consider: Destructive habits, fears, damaged self-image, a difficult relationship, illness, addictive behaviors, occult practices, anger, jealousy, selfishness, greed, etc?) What could you share about your experiences that would help others?

List some major commitments that you are involved in at this time. Pray to see the Lord's guidance and purposes worked out in them.

Day 3

Judah's Inheritance; Caleb and Othniel. Read Joshua 14–15

22. Who was included in the decision making process about the land (Joshua 14:1)?
- How were the decisions made (14:2)? See Numbers 27:21 and Proverbs 16:33.
23. What did the Levites inherit (14:4)? How was the number of 12 tribes maintained when portioning out the land?
- See more about the Levites inheritance in Numbers 18:20–21,24 and 35:1–5.
24. What reasons did Caleb give for his request for land (14:6–8)?
- On what promise did he base his appeal (14:9)? (See Deuteronomy 1:35–36.)
25. What did Caleb say about his ability to conquer the land (14:10–11)?
- Note: Since 45 years had passed since the wandering in the wilderness, about how many years had the Israelites fought in taking the land?
26. How brave would you say Caleb was at 85 (14:12)? How daunting was this enemy (14:15)?

27. From Numbers 13:33, what had terrified the people before?

- What kind of courage and trust had Caleb (and Joshua) shown after spying out the land 45 years earlier? See Numbers 13:30 and 14:6–9.

28. What was Joshua's response to Caleb's request (14:13)? Why was it fitting that Caleb be the first to receive a portion of the land?

FYI: "Hebron had been the burial place of Abraham and Jacob (Genesis 23:19; 25:9; 50:13). Caleb volunteered for the hardest assignment of all in the conquest of the land, and he was the only one to complete his job (note Joshua 15:14)." – The Defender's Study Bible

29. What statement is repeated 3 times about Caleb's faith and obedience (14:8,9,14)? (See also (Numbers 14:24; 32:12; Deuteronomy 1:36.) What do you think would have happened if all of Israel had had the faith and courage of Caleb?

Joshua 15

30. Which tribe's inheritance in Canaan is described first (15:1)? What do you learn about the tribe of Judah from Genesis 49:10 and Matthew 1:2–3,16?

FYI: "Caleb had been Judah's representative among the twelve spies, and Hebron, his inheritance, was in the lot assigned to Judah. The latter was assigned first of all partly because of Caleb, but also because of Judah's large size (Numbers 26:22) and probably also because of the leadership role originally prophesied for Judah by Jacob (Genesis 49:10)." – The Defender's Study Bible

31. How successfully did Caleb carry out his plan (14:12) to occupy Hebron (15:13–14)?

FYI: "It is a subtle irony that the message from the 10 spies about the fearsomeness of the Anakites ultimately comes down to one simple action of faith on the part of Caleb to take the city. Forty-five years later Caleb's faith exposes how misplaced the people's fears really were." – Chris Miller notes

32. Although Caleb's personal inheritance was Hebron, how did he involve himself in the defeat of Debir for his tribe of Judah (15:15–16)? (What did the individual tribes need to do in their respective inherited territories?)

33. What offer did Caleb make for attacking Kiriath-sepher (15:16)? In what ways might the man who accepted Caleb's challenge make a good husband for his daughter?

34. How was Othniel related to Caleb (15:17)? Do you think Caleb knew Othniel might be the one to accept the challenge?
- What do you learn about Othniel from Judges 3:9–11?
 - What request did Achsah make of her father (15:19)? Why do you think so many personal details about Caleb's family inheritance were recorded?
35. What did the tribe of Judah fail to do (15:63)? Contrast 15:14. According to 2 Samuel 5:6–10, when were the Jebusites conquered?
- ✎ Applying the Word:** How would you rate yourself as being strong and courageous? What underlying reasons would you give as why people such as Caleb are able to accept the challenges of life and take them on victoriously?

Day 4

Ephraim and Manasseh's Inheritance. Joshua 16–17

36. What did the tribe of Ephraim fail to do (16:10)? Why hadn't Gezer been completely destroyed earlier (10:33)? What reasons do you see for not driving them out?
- FYI:** "This sort of compromise seems innocent, but it became the way that much idolatry and immoral worship was adopted by the people of Israel. This is one reason why we see so many struggles in the days of the Judges. The Israelites did not fully conquer for two reasons. First, they wanted peace at any cost. Second, they wanted wealth. For the sake of *ease* and *money*, they disobeyed God and fell short of what He had for them – as we do today also." – David Guzik
37. What unusual problem presented itself in the tribe of Manasseh and what decision was made (17:4)?
- (Numbers 27:1–11 gives further details about this situation.) What main concern prompted these daughters to ask for land? See Numbers 27:4.
 - What other rules about an inheritance did Moses give (Numbers 27:8–11)?

38. What problems are noted with the tribes of Judah (15:63) and Ephraim (16:10) and Manasseh (17:12–13)?

- What does this tolerance of evil by the three most prominent tribes indicate about the underlying weakness of the nation of Israel?

FYI: “The Canaanites and their idolatrous religious practices would slowly work against Israel like a cancer, as we will learn in the book of Judges. In growing negligence to drive out the enemy as instructed, Israel was setting itself up for a fall.”
– Tony Evans (258)

39. What prompted the sons of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) to complain to Joshua (17:14)?

- What solution did Joshua give them (17:15)?
- Why did they object (17:16)? How did their response compare to Caleb’s in 14:11–12?

40. How did Joshua turn their argument into a challenge (17:17–18)?

- What did they need to remember? See Deuteronomy 7:17–24.

✎ Applying the Word: With what things has God entrusted you? Are there any principles you have learned through the attitudes and behaviors of the tribes, in claiming their inheritance, that you can apply to the gifts you have received?