

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 11

This chapter relates how that the kings of the northern parts of Canaan combine together against Joshua, (⁶¹⁰Joshua 11:1-5); and that the Lord encouraged him to fight with them, and did deliver them into his hands, who, with all their people, were smitten by him, (⁶¹⁶Joshua 11:6-11); and how that he took their cities, and destroyed the inhabitants of them, and took the spoil of them for a prey, (⁶¹²Joshua 11:12-15); and so became master of the whole country, both southern and northern, which is described (⁶¹⁶Joshua 11:16-20); and the chapter is concluded with an account of his cutting off the Anakim from various parts, which finished the conquest of the whole land, (⁶²¹Joshua 10:21-23).

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard [these things],* etc.] The taking of Jericho and Ai, the defeat of the five kings, and the conquest of the southern part of the land of Canaan; he was alarmed by them, and sent to all the northern kings to join with him against Israel; and he the rather took this upon him, because as Adonizedek king of Jerusalem was the principal king in the southern part of the land, so was he in the northern part; (see ⁶¹⁰Joshua 11:10); Hazor fell to the tribe of Naphtali, (⁶³⁶Joshua 19:36). It was situated, as Josephus ^{f211} says, on the lake Samachonitis, the same with the waters of Merom, (⁶¹⁶Joshua 11:5). According to Adrichomius ^{f212}, it was four miles from the castle Theron to the north, six miles from Caesarea Philippi to the southwest, and nine miles from the great sea to the east; and was, in the times of Christ, one of the ten principal cities of the region of Decapolis, in which he preached, (⁴⁰⁵Matthew 4:25); and is now called Antiopia; and in the Arabic version here it is called Caesarea, and, according to Bunting ^{f213}, it lay eighty miles from Jerusalem to the north:

that he sent to Jobab king of Madon; of which place we nowhere else read but in (⁶²⁹Joshua 12:19); though Brocard ^{f214} finds a place near Dan, called Madan by the Turks at this day:

and to the king of Shimron; not Samaria, as many think, for that was built by Omri, king of Israel, and had its name from Shemer, the owner of the hill on which it was built some hundreds of years after this; besides Samaria was in the tribe of Ephraim, this in the tribe of Zebulun, (^{<6895>}Joshua 19:15); and is called Shimronmeron, (^{<6220>}Joshua 12:20); and in the Jerusalem Talmud ^{f215} Simoniah, and here in the Septuagint version Symoson:

and to the king of Achshaph: a city which fell to the lot of the tribe of Asher, (^{<6825>}Joshua 19:25). The Septuagint calls it Aziph, as if it was the same with Achzib, or Ecdippa, now called Zib: but Achshaph and Achzib are manifestly distinguished, (^{<6825>}Joshua 19:25,29). Jerom says ^{f216}, in his time it was a little village, and went by the name of Chasalus, eight miles from Diocaesarea, at the foot of Mount Tabor. The Arabic version adds a fourth king that Jabin sent to, called “the king of Mausel”; but we read not of any such place in the land of Canaan.

Ver. 2. *And to the kings that [were] on the north of the mountains*, etc.] Of Libanus and Antilibanus, with others near them; so Josephus ^{f217} says, the kings about Lebanon being Canaanites, fought against them, i.e. the Israelites; for Lebanon lay to the north of the land:

and of the plains south of Cinneroth; or Gennesaret, of the land and lake of which we read in the New Testament, (^{<4034>}Matthew 14:34 ^{<4065>}Mark 6:53 ^{<4071>}Luke 5:1); and seems to have respect chiefly to the famous plain of Jezreel, or Esdraelon, of which (see Gill on “^{<2005>}Hosea 1:5”);

and in the valley; which may more especially design the valley of Jezreel, as it is called in the above place, and distinguish it from other plains; it was two miles broad, and ten long:

and in the borders of Dor, on the west; which fell to the lot of the tribe of Manasseh, (^{<6871>}Joshua 17:11); which Pliny ^{f218} calls Dorum, and mentions it along with the promontory of Carmel; so Josephus says ^{f219}, in Phoenicia, near Mount Carmel, is a city called Dora, four days’ journey distant from Judea; that is, that part of the land of Israel particularly so called; some copies read Idumea. According to Jerom ^{f220}, it was nine miles from Caesarea of Palestine, as you go to Tyre; and in his time a desert. It was a haven in the Mediterranean sea, and lies three leagues from the castle of the “pilgrims” near Mount Carmel; and, as a traveller says, is now so decayed, that there is nothing more extant than a large and high tower, which the inhabitants still call Dorteite ^{f221}.

Ver. 3. [*And to the Canaanites on the east and on the west*, etc.] 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, (^{<04133>}Numbers 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, (^{<04133>}Judges 3:3).

Ver. 4. *And they went out*, etc.] 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 ^{<04133>}Judges 4:3); Josephus ^{f22} gives us the number of this great army, and says it consisted of three hundred thousand footmen, ten thousand horse, 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.

Ver. 5. *And when all those kings were met together*, etc.] At some certain place, which Jabin had appointed:

they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom: Josephus ^{f223} says it was at Berotha; perhaps it should be Merotha, a city of upper Galilee, not far from Cedesa, the same he elsewhere calls ^{f224} Meroth, These waters

are the same with the lake Samachonitis, on which Hazor was situated; so that it was near Jabin where the rendezvous was. This lake is thought^{f225} to have its name from the Arabic word “Samacha”, which signifies high, as Merom does in Hebrew. It was, as Josephus says^{f226} thirty furlongs broad, and sixty long, and its waters clayish. Jerom says^{f227}, in his time there was here a village called Merrus, twelve miles from the city Sebaste by Dothaim: here the kings and their armies met

to fight against Israel; so that they were the aggressors, which made the war still more lawful.

Ver. 6. *And the Lord said unto Joshua, be not afraid because of them,* etc.] Of their number, of their horsemen, and of their scythed chariots; which might at first hearing occasion some fear and dread. And according to Josephus^{f228}, the multitude of them terrified both Joshua and the Israelites; and therefore the Lord appeared and spoke to him for his encouragement: though what was said was for the sake of the Israelites, and to animate them who might be disheartened, rather than for the sake of Joshua, who was of a bold and courageous spirit. Whether this was said to him at Gilgal, and out of the tabernacle there, quickly after the tidings of the combination of the kings were brought to him, or whether when upon his march towards them, is uncertain:

for tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up slain before Israel; as many were, and others wounded and put to flight, as the word signifies, so as to be as good as dead. If Gilgal was twenty two miles from the waters of Merom, as Bunting says^{f229}, and supposing this to be said to him before he set out, he must travel all night to reach thither the next day; and if it was sixty miles, as some say, this must be said to him when on his march, and within a day’s march of the enemy; for Josephus says^{f230} it was on the fifth day that he came up with them, and fell upon them:

thou shalt hough their horses; cut their nerves under their hams, or hamstringing them, so that they might be useless hereafter; for the kings of Israel were not to multiply horses; and Joshua, as their chief ruler, was to have no advantage of them by their falling into his hands:

and burn their chariots with fire; that so they might not be used by the Israelites afterwards, who might be tempted to put their trust and confidence in them, as many did.

Ver. 7. *So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them,* etc.] 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 provided for them:

and they fell upon them; at once, which threw them into disorder and confusion.

Ver. 8. *And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel,* etc.] The whole host, who either were killed or wounded, or put to flight: it was of the Lord that Israel was directed to make so quick a march, and come upon them so suddenly, and that they were off their guard, and unprovided for them, and so fell into their hands:

who smote them; with the edge of the sword killed and wounded great numbers; and the rest fleeing, they

chased them unto great Zidon; not that there was another Zidon called the less, as Kimchi and Ben Melech thought there seemed to be, and which also Jerom ^{f231} suggests; but this was so called because of its greatness, the large extent of it, and the abundance of wealth and riches in it: Curtius says ^{f232}, it was renowned for its antiquity and the fame of its buildings; and Mela says ^{f233}, that before it was conquered by the Persians, it was the greatest of the maritime cities, though now greatly reduced: Mark Maundrell ^{f234} says of it,

“Sidon is stocked well enough with inhabitants but is very much shrunk from its ancient extent, and more from its splendour, as appears from a great many beautiful pillars that lie scattered up and down the gardens without the present walls:”

it lay, according to Strabo, not more than two hundred furlongs from Tyre ^{f235}, or twenty five miles: it was more ancient than that, which is called the

daughter of it: Homer speaks much of Sidon, as the same writer observes, but not a word of Tyre: Josephus^{f236} thinks it had its name from Sidon, the firstborn of Canaan, and that he built it, (^{<0105>}Genesis 10:15); but Justin says^{f237} it had its name from the plenty of fishes there: and Tzaid in the Chaldee and Syriac languages signifies fishing and a fisherman: hence Bethsaida, a city mentioned in the New Testament, (^{<0121>}Matthew 11:21 ^{<0165>}Mark 6:45 ^{<0190>}Luke 9:10 10:13 ^{<0144>}John 1:44 12:21), had its name; and Sidon is at this day called Said, and is now in the hands of the Turks: and though it was a part of the land of Canaan, and belonged to the tribe of Asher, never was conquered and possessed by them, but remained an Heathen city to the time of Christ:

and unto Misrephothmaim, or “boilings of water”, it seems as if it was a place of hot baths, but the Targum renders it “pits of water”, which Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech say, were pits into which the salt waters of the sea were drawn, and where they were heated by the sun, and made salt of; and so it is thought this was a place of salt pits, where salt was boiled, either by the heat of the sun or by fire^{f238}. Junius and Tremellius render the word by “glass furnaces”, furnaces in which glass was made; and it is certain, that at Sidon, and near it, within the borders of which this place was, (^{<0136>}Joshua 13:6); glass was made: Pliny^{f239} calls Sidon the artificer of glass, or a city where glass was made: and Strabo says^{f240}, that between Ace and Tyre is a shore which bears glassy sand, but they say it is not melted there, but carried to Sidon to be melted; and some say the Sidonians have a glassy sand fit for melting: Calmet^{f241} thinks this place is the same with Sarepta, (^{<0105>}Luke 4:26); which had its name from melting: of what construction the furnaces were in this place cannot be said, no doubt great improvement has been since made^{f242}:

and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward, and they smote them, until they left them none remaining; the same with the valley of Lebanon; now as Sidon lay northwest and this was eastward, it seems that the armies of the Canaanites, in their consternation and confusion, fled some to the west and some to the east, who were pursued by different bodies of the army of Israel, separated for that purpose.

Ver. 9. *And Joshua did unto them as the Lord bade him*, etc.] 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 ^{<1084>}2 Samuel 8:4).

Ver. 10. *And Joshua at that time turned back and took Hazor*, etc.] After he had chased the Canaanites to the places mentioned, he returned to Hazor, near to which Joshua first fell upon them, but through the pursuit he was led on many miles beyond it: Bunting says ^{f243}, it was thirty two miles from Sidon:

and smote the king thereof with the sword; who, very probably, upon the surprise at the waters of Merom, fled to his capital for safety; but that being taken by Joshua, he was slain by him with the sword:

for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms; before mentioned, (^{<610>}Joshua 11:1); but not of all the land of Canaan: Jerom ^{f244} says, it was the metropolis of all the kingdoms of the Philistines; and though they were not now subject to it, and had kings of their own, yet it appears that the king of this place was in great authority, and regard was paid unto him; and this seems to be the reason why Joshua hastened to take this city, slay the king of it, and burn it with fire, because it had been the principal in this war, and might, if not prevented, raise new troubles; wherefore, as a precaution to that, and to deter the rest, he hastened the conquest and destruction of it.

Ver. 11. *And they smote all the souls that [were] therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying [them]*, etc.] 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, (^{<1042>}Judges 4:2).

Ver. 12. *And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them did Joshua take*, etc.] 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 avarice, but had regard purely to the command of Moses, which was of God, (^{<R10>}Deuteronomy 7:1,2).

Ver. 13. *But as for the cities that stood still in their strength*, etc.] Whose walls were not demolished when taken, as Kimchi and Jarchi interpret it, or that “stood upon their heaps”^{f245}; 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^{f246}, that God said to Moses, and Moses said to Joshua, that he should burn it, and that only.

Ver. 14. *And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves*, etc.] 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.

Ver. 15. *As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua*, etc.] Which was to destroy the people of the land, (^{<R10>}Deuteronomy 7:1,2);

so did Joshua, he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses; both with respect to the destruction of the people, and of all their images, pictures, altars, groves, and high places; (see ^{<D241>}Exodus 34:11-13 ^{<D278>}Numbers 27:18,19 33:52 ^{<R10>}Deuteronomy 7:1-5 31:7).

Ver. 16. *So Joshua took all that land*, etc.] 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 ^{<4139>}Luke 1:39,65);

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, (^{<6304>}Joshua 10:40);

and all the land of Goshen; (see ^{<6304>}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 Eletheropolis, towards the north and west, Jerom says, in his day, was called “Sephela”, or “the vale” ^{f247};

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, (^{<3673>}Ezekiel 17:23) (^{<3604>}Ezekiel 20:40); 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.

Ver. 17. [*Even*] *from the mount Halak, that goeth up unto Seir*, etc.] 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 Baalgad, 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.

Ver. 18. *Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.*] 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, (^{<6300>}Joshua 10:10-14); but were the work of some years; Josephus ^{f248} says five years, but the common notion of the Jews is, that Joshua was seven years in subduing the land of Canaan ^{f249}; our Bishop Usher ^{f250} thinks it was done in six years; and it may be concluded that it was about six or seven years ere this work was completely finished.

Ver. 19. *There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel,* etc.] 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 ^{f251}:

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 ^{<R100>}Joshua 9:1-5);

all [other] they took in battle; refusing to submit to them and make peace with them.

Ver. 20. *For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts,* etc.] As he hardened the hearts of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, that his power might be displayed in their destruction:

that they should come against Israel battle; and so fall in it:

that he might destroy them utterly; for their abominable wickedness, idolatry, incest, etc. they had been guilty of:

[and] that they might have no favour; which they would have had, had they made peace as the Gibeonites did; or that they might not pray and make supplication, the Lord not giving them a spirit of supplication, but an hard heart, as Gussetius ^{f252} observes the words may be interpreted, though he seems to prefer the former, sense:

but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses; (^{<R100>}Deuteronomy 7:1,2).

Ver. 21. *And at that time came Joshua,* etc.] After he had made a conquest of the land, or at the time he made it, as before related:

and cut off the Anakims from the mountains; whither, upon the conquest of the land, they had betaken themselves, and lived in dens and caves: these were giants, so called from Anak the father of them; though these are not to be restrained to his posterity, but include all other giants in the land; and the Targum renders the word by “mighty men”; and as some of them dwelt in mountains, others in cities, as follows:

from Hebron; where the children of Anak dwelt when the spies were sent into the land between forty and fifty years before this; and though the inhabitants of Hebron had been before destroyed by Joshua, these Anakims, who very likely then made their escape, returned and took possession of it after Joshua's departure, and while he was engaged in making other conquests; as we find that after this others of the same race again possessed it, and were in the possession of it after the death of Joshua, when they were slain by the tribe of Judah, (^{<4010>}Judges 1:10); from Debir: where others of them also had got after the conquest of it; unless we suppose, as I see no great reason to object to it, that these were cut off both at Hebron and Debir, at the time of the taking of them, of which (see ^{<6005>}Joshua 10:36-39);

from Anab; a city which fell to the lot of the tribe of Judah, (^{<6550>}Joshua 15:50). Jerom ^{f253} says, in his time it was a village, near Diospolis or Lydda, about four miles from it to the east, and called Bethoannaba; but he says, that most affirm it to be eight miles from it, and called Bethannaba: Masius conjectures, that it is the same with the city of Nob; for, he says, that travellers in those parts affirm, that the city Nob is called Bethanoba and Bethanopolis:

and from all the mountains of Judah; the hill country of Judea, and the mountains round about Jerusalem:

and from all the mountains of Israel; as those about Samaria, and elsewhere:

Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities; which they had formerly inhabited, or had got into the possession of.

Ver. 22. *There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel*, etc.] For those that escaped the sword fled elsewhere, particularly to the following places:

only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod there remained; that is, some of the Anakims or giants; these were three of the five principalities of the Philistines, and were never conquered and possessed by Israel, (see ^{<6005>}Joshua 13:3); of the city of Gaza, (see Gill on "Amos 1:7-8"); and (see Gill on "^{<3004>}Zephaniah 2:4"); and of Gath, (see Gill on "^{<3002>}Amos 6:2"); Ashdod is the same with Azotus, (see Gill on "^{<4800>}Acts 8:40"): Mela says ^{f254}, the port of Azotus was a mart for the merchandises of Arabia, and was built on such an eminence, that from the top of it, at the fourth watch,

might be seen the rising of the sun at the mountain Azotus; see ``Who discomfited the right wing, and pursued them unto the mount Azotus.'' (1 Maccabees 9:15)

this city held out a siege of twenty nine years against Psammitticus, king of Egypt, (see Gill on “^{<2310>}Isaiah 20:1”).

Ver. 23. *So Joshua took the whole land*, etc.] Of Canaan, the far greater and better part of it, all before described; all that he went against, he failed not in any of his attempts; no place stood out against him that he besieged or summoned, all yielded to him:

according to all that the Lord said unto Moses: in (^{<5123>}Deuteronomy 11:23-25);

and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel, according to their divisions by their tribes; as is after related in this book:

and the land rested from war; there were no combinations of any of the dispersed Canaanites, or insurrections made by them, nor any annoyance given to Israel by the Philistines, who inhabited five principal cities, with what belonged to them; nor did Joshua attempt anything more in a warlike manner: and so it became a land of rest, as the heavenly Canaan will be to the spiritual Israel and church of God, after their militant state is ended, in which they now are; being engaged with many spiritual enemies, the Canaanites that are in the land, but then their warfare will be ended.