

"All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work."

You might wonder –

how is Joshua 11-12 “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction,  
and for training in righteousness”?

Maybe for teaching historical facts?!

I mean, sure, all truth is God’s truth –  
but how do these chapters help equip me for “every good work”?

Let me start by saying that it is not as simple as “go and do likewise”!

I am very confident that you should *not* burn South Bend with fire.

You should not devote to destruction every resident of Granger!

Rather, think about Psalm 44 – which we sang earlier.

Psalm 44 remembers the conquest – how God drove out the nations before Israel.

“For not by their own sword did they win the land,  
nor did their own arm save them,  
but your right hand and your arm, and the light of your face,  
for you delighted in them.” (Ps 44:2-3)

And so the sons of Korah proclaim “You are my King, O God” –

and even though you have rejected us and you have made us sheep for the slaughter,  
yet we still trust in you.

The lesson of the Conquest – in Psalm 44 –

is that God is King!

He is the one who gives victory.

He is the one who goes before his people!

You might think – then – that the key is Israel’s faithfulness.

If Israel obeys God, then God gives Israel victory – right?!

Over the last couple weeks, you would be excused if you came away with that conclusion!

After the victory at Jericho, Achan took the devoted goods –  
and judgment fell upon God’s people.

Only when they disciplined Achan – and removed the evil from the camp –  
only then did God give them victory over Ai.

And then there was concern over whether the alliance with Gibeon would result in judgment.  
After all, God really does care whether we obey him!  
God *never* says that some sins are okay!

Psalm 44 wrestles with this –  
because according to the Psalmist – Israel *had* been faithful!  
Their defeat in battle could not be attributed to their sin.  
They had done what God said!  
They had been faithful to God's covenant!

And yet their enemies had defeated them – humiliated them...

How do we make sense of this?  
If obedience is supposed to result in victory –  
then how do we make sense of the awful tragedies and sufferings of life?

If we pay attention to the text of Joshua,  
we will discover that this is not only a true historical account  
of what happened when Israel invaded the Land.

It is also profitable for you.

Consider the opening lines of our passage – verses 29-30 of chapter 10:

### **1. The Southern Campaign (10:29-43)**

*<sup>29</sup> Then Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Makkedah to Libnah and fought against Libnah.*

Indeed, the profit is evident from the very first verse of our text.  
"Then Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Makkedah to Libnah..."

You know the story of Moses!  
Then Israel grumbled against the LORD, and complained against Moses,  
saying, "why have you brought us into the wilderness to perish?!"  
Israel is following Joshua.

They are obeying his voice, and are conquering the nations.

And so v30 declares, *<sup>30</sup> And the LORD gave it also and its king into the hand of Israel.*

But if that's all we say, then Psalm 44 makes no sense.  
If God always rewards obedience with blessing and disobedience with cursing,

then God is a magical genie!  
If you just do all the right things, then you'll get what you want!!

So keep reading:

*And he [who is "he"? Joshua] struck it with the edge of the sword, and every person in it; he left none remaining in it. And he did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.*

We saw at the beginning of the book of Joshua  
that God promised that *Joshua* would cause Israel to inherit.  
Israel does not inherit the land based on their *own* faithfulness.

No, Israel inherits the land because of *Joshua's* faithfulness!

The lesson is plain:

God will destroy his enemies through the hand of his anointed conqueror!

If you want to live in the promised land – the eternal inheritance –  
then you must line up behind the anointed conqueror and follow him.

"If anyone would come after me,  
let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."

These 15 verses at the end of chapter 10 chronicle the destruction of the southern Canaanites.  
Libnah falls in verse 30.  
Lachish in verse 32 (along with Gezer-v 33)  
Eglon in verse 35  
Hebron in verse 37 (also known as Kiriath Arba – the place where Sarah had died –  
later David's first royal city)  
and Debir in verse 39

<sup>31</sup> Then Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Libnah to Lachish and laid siege to it and fought against it. <sup>32</sup> And the LORD gave Lachish into the hand of Israel, and he captured it on the second day and struck it with the edge of the sword, and every person in it, as he had done to Libnah. <sup>33</sup> Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish. And Joshua struck him and his people, until he left none remaining. <sup>34</sup> Then Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Lachish to Eglon. And they laid siege to it and fought against it. <sup>35</sup> And they captured it on that day, and struck it with the edge of the sword. And he devoted every person in it to destruction that day, as he had done to Lachish. <sup>36</sup> Then Joshua and all Israel with him went up from Eglon to Hebron. And they fought against it <sup>37</sup> and captured it and struck it with the edge of the sword, and its king and its towns, and every person in it. He left none remaining, as he had done to Eglon, and devoted it to destruction and every person in it. <sup>38</sup> Then Joshua and all Israel with him turned back to Debir and fought against it <sup>39</sup> and he captured it with its king and all its towns. And they struck them with the edge of the sword and devoted to destruction every person in it; he left none remaining. Just as he had done to Hebron and to Libnah and its king, so he did to Debir and to its king.

<sup>40</sup> So Joshua struck the whole land, the hill country and the Negeb and the lowland and the slopes, and all their kings. He left none remaining, but devoted to destruction all that breathed, just as the LORD God of Israel commanded. <sup>41</sup> And Joshua struck them from Kadesh-barnea as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, as far as Gibeon.

These were the leading cities of the Canaanites in the south.

Chapter 10 may make it sound as though they have killed everyone in the south.

But that's not what the text says!

To say that "he devoted to destruction all that breathed,  
just as the LORD God of Israel commanded"

is not the same as saying that there are no Canaanites left in the south.

You have to capture them before you can kill them!

All the text says is that Joshua was faithful to God's command.

They are destroying their enemies, rather than letting them live  
(even if many may be fleeing into the hills).

As later chapters will reveal, there is still more work to be done.

But having captured the leading cities,

and after slaughtering their enemies throughout the south,

Joshua has quickly cut off the war-making power of the southern Canaanites.

And in verse 42 we here the main point of all this:

<sup>42</sup> And Joshua captured all these kings and their land at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel. <sup>43</sup> Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

Note the connection between Land and Seed.

"all these kings and their land"

The kings of the nations are the heirs of their gods.

As the Holy Seed now comes into the land,

the seed of the Serpent is driven back.

And also notice the importance of the LORD's anointed.

It is *Joshua* who captured these kings and their land *at one time*.

Think back to Psalm 44.

It's not enough for Israel to be faithful.

(After all, *all have sinned* and fall short of the glory of God).

We need Joshua – we need Jesus – to go before us!

And we need the LORD God of Israel to fight for us!

You can see in the basic message of the book of Joshua

that we need these two things:  
one who is a true and faithful man –  
and one who is God himself –  
to go before us.

And so Joshua and all Israel return to the camp at Gilgal.

## **2. The Northern Campaign (11:1-15)**

### **a. The Northern Alliance (1-5)**

*11 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, <sup>2</sup> and to the kings who were in the northern hill country, and in the Arabah south of Chinneroth, and in the lowland, and in Naphtalim on the west, <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> And all these kings joined their forces and came and encamped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel.*

But Joshua's blitzkrieg triumph in the south only rouses the wrath of the nations against him.  
The Northern Alliance gathers the hosts of hell against him:

Jabin, king of Hazor, gathers the forces of the nations together.

Jabin may be the dynastic name of Hazor,  
since another Jabin of Hazor will be named in Judges 4,  
as the king who sends Sisera against Israel.

But Jabin gathers an alliance of Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites,  
Jebusites and Hivites, against Israel.

And they come "a great horde, in number like the sand that is on the seashore,  
with very many horses and chariots.

And Jabin comes against Israel at the waters of Merom,  
literally, the waters of the Heights.

There is no other reference to Merom in scripture.  
But the combination is interesting.

Jabin assembles a great army-compared to the sand on the seashore,  
which was part of God's promise to Abraham.

This is a counterfeit army.

They have assembled a great horde against the people of God.

You might say that Jabin is the pre-Anti-christ!

And he gathers at the waters of the heights,

(he word used for the high places of worship)

If you look at the battle of Revelation 19,

you see its fore-telling in the Battle of the Waters of Merom.

Many nations are gathering together to put an end to the Lord's Anointed.  
(think also of Psalm 2 – “why do heathen nations rage...”?)

**b. The Defeat of the Northern Alliance (6-9)**

*<sup>6</sup> 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.” <sup>7</sup> So Joshua and all his warriors came suddenly against them by the waters of Merom and fell upon them. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> And Joshua did to them just as the LORD said to him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.*

The LORD speaks to Joshua and declares the defeat of the Northern Alliance.  
And he commands them to burn their chariots in the fire.

You might think that this was a missed opportunity.  
Israel could have become a leading power in the region  
if they had captured those chariots and trained....

But that wasn't the point!

God is the one who fights for his people.  
They don't need the latest and greatest technology.  
They need the Word of the LORD to go before them and defeat their enemies.

And that is precisely what God does.  
God gave them into the hand of Israel,  
and so Joshua did as the LORD commanded.  
He burned the chariots in the fire and hamstrung the horses.

Our God is the Divine Warrior.  
He does not need our nifty technology to win his battles.

Paul will make a similar point about spiritual warfare in the New Testament.  
How does salvation come to the ends of the earth?

Through the foolishness of preaching!

And particularly, Paul says, the “folly of what we preach.”

Because there were plenty of “preachers” in the ancient world.  
Plenty of preachers who would tell you how to live a good life.  
“Just try harder – do better – follow my tips to wealth, power, and prestige!”

J. Gresham Machen points out that  
“The strange thing about Christianity was that it adopted an entirely different method.  
It transformed the lives of men not by appealing to the human will,  
but by telling a story;  
not by exhortation,  
but by the narration of an event.

It is no wonder that such a method seemed strange.  
Could anything be more impractical  
than to attempt to influence conduct by rehearsing events  
concerning the death of a religious teacher?

That is what Paul called “the foolishness of the message.”

It seemed foolish to the ancient world,  
and it seems foolish to liberal preachers today.  
But the strange thing is that it works.

The effects of it appear even in this world.

Where the most eloquent exhortation fails,  
the simple story of an event succeeds;  
the lives of men are transformed by a piece of news.”  
(Machen, Christianity and Liberalism)

What was it that changed the life of Rahab forever?

The news that the God of Israel was bringing judgment on Canaan.  
The same news brought terror and destruction to the rest of Jericho –  
but for Rahab (and all who joined themselves to her household) –  
that news brought salvation!

What changed the lives of the Gibeonites?

The same message!  
And rather than resist – the Gibeonites repented and believed the news!  
And thus the message of destruction became the message of salvation to the Gibeonites!

The message of the cross is foolishness to the Greeks – and a stumbling block to the Jews.

Verses 10-15 then describe the destruction of the northern alliance.

### **c. The Destruction of the Northern Alliance (10-15)**

*<sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> And they struck with the sword all who were in it, devoting them to destruction; <sup>[d]</sup> there was none left that breathed. And he burned Hazor with fire. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> But none of the cities that stood on mounds did Israel burn, except*

*Hazor alone; that Joshua burned. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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.*

With the LORD going before him,  
Joshua is able to capture all the leading cities of his enemies

Hazor is punished for heading up the Northern Alliance.  
It alone is burned.

But all the cities are depopulated,  
as Israel brings the final judgment against these nations.

And the focus of these verses is on how Joshua did what the LORD had commanded Moses.  
Again – *Joshua* causes Israel to inherit the land.  
Joshua’s name means “the LORD saves” – and in Greek, that name is Jesus.

So Joshua is the Jesus of the OT –  
the one whose faithful obedience causes his people to inherit God’s promises.

Israel’s job is to follow Jesus.

Verses 16-20 then give us a summary of the conquest of the *land*.

#### **d. The Conquest of the Land (16-20)**

*<sup>16</sup> 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 <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> 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.*

The point of the conquest is stated clearly in verse 20.

God's purpose was to bring judgment against these nations,  
as a picture of what is in store for any nation that does not yield itself to the Lord.

It was the Lord’s doing to harden their hearts –  
*in order that they should be devoted to destruction and should receive no mercy.*

As we saw last time, cities that humbled themselves before the LORD *did* receive mercy.  
But Gibeon was the only city that did that as a whole.

I think that the Canaanites give us a pretty good picture of what the final judgment will look like.  
When Jesus comes in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
I don't think that we will see very many people "wishing" that they could convert.

Their hearts are hard.  
They hate God – they hate God's people.  
They would prefer to be "free" in hell  
than to spend eternity with those they hate!

**e. The Conquest of the Seed (21-23)**

*<sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> 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.*

Verses 21-23 then summarize the conquest of the seed.  
The Anakim are the giants – the great warriors of the ancient world.

But now the sons of God, led by Joshua, the anointed conqueror,  
cut off the Anakim from the land.  
Only a few are left in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod.  
The chief cities of the Philistines!

Indeed, many years later another of the Anakim will arise and taunt Israel,  
claiming that Yahweh could not defend them.  
And God will not raise up a mighty warrior to face him.  
No, God will call a shepherd boy to cast down the mighty Goliath.

The Seed of the Woman must triumph over the seed of the serpent.  
Israel must destroy the Anakim.  
It is no accident that David's stone hits Goliath square in the forehead.

The seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent!

(Verse 23)

*<sup>23</sup> 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.*

And the land had rest from war.

We'll see later that there are still foes to be fought.

But the point is that Joshua was faithful.

He overthrew all the major cities,

many of which Israel captured and inhabited.

(Others apparently they were unable to inhabit quickly,

and so the locals were able to reassert control-see Judges 1)

He slaughtered all those devoted to destruction.

It doesn't mean that all the Canaanites were killed.

It means that Joshua did not leave anyone alive (except those who fled and hid! – if you can't catch them, you can't kill them!)

And so we have the prelude to the division of the inheritance that starts in ch 13.

### **3. Retrospect (chapter 12)**

But before we move on,

we are given the big picture of the conquest.

#### **a. Kings Defeated by Moses East of the Jordan (1-6)**

*12 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: <sup>2</sup> 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, <sup>3</sup> 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; <sup>4</sup> and Og<sup>[e]</sup> king of Bashan, one of the remnant of the Rephaim, who lived at Ashtaroth and at Edrei <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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.*

Moses had conquered two kings on the east side of the Jordan.

Sihon and Og (v2-5) of Bashan.

Og is called one of the remnant of the Rephaim (Anakim) –

he is called a remnant because in Genesis 14 they had been overthrown.

And Moses had given that land to the 2 ½ tribes – Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh.

But then we hear in verses 7-24 of the:

#### **b. Kings Defeated by Joshua West of the Jordan (7-24)**

*<sup>7</sup> 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, <sup>8</sup> 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): <sup>9</sup> the king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one; <sup>10</sup> the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; <sup>11</sup> the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; <sup>12</sup> the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; <sup>13</sup> the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; <sup>14</sup> the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; <sup>15</sup> the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; <sup>16</sup> the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; <sup>17</sup> the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hepher, one; <sup>18</sup> the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; <sup>19</sup> the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; <sup>20</sup> the king of Shimron-meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; <sup>21</sup> the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; <sup>22</sup> the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam in Carmel, one; <sup>23</sup> the king of Dor in Naphath-dor, one; the king of Goim in Galilee,<sup>[1]</sup> one; <sup>24</sup> the king of Tirzah, one: in all, thirty-one kings.*

There were 31 kings in all.

By walking through these 31 kings, city by city,  
we are reminded of God's providence.

31 kings with their fortified towns fell against the armies of the LORD.

31 kings whose armies were truly "like the sand of the seashore"?

Yet it is Abraham's seed who triumphs over the nations.

It is Joshua who causes Israel to inherit the land.

It is Jesus who causes us to inherit the new creation!

So when you are tempted to wander away from Christ –  
remember that he is the one who conquers all his and our enemies!