

Joshua 11 – God’s Power and Israel’s Progress in the North

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Bezuyen, Henry, Cairns, Steward, JFB, Poole, Geneva, Trapp, Gill, Calvin? Might fortress?

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Israel gained a foothold 立足 in the south of Canaan after the defeat of the 5-nation alliance led by Adoni Zedek of Jerusalem. This gave Israel access to resources 资源 like food and housing, and a time to catch their national breath. But that victory was not sufficient for them. God had given them the whole land of Canaan and defined its boundaries. They knew what they had to conquer. They needed to rid 摆脱 the land of idol worshippers so that they would not become a thorn 刺 in the Israelites sides.

Today, you will see the consequent battles that Israel faced as a larger alliance was formed against them and how God helped them to expand the kingdom, even in the face of severe challenges.

Our headings are: **Support to fight the Northern Alliance**, **Success in fighting the Northern Alliance**, and **Stability in the whole land**.

Our goals are: **You will see God’s hand in expanding his kingdom and that you will understand and play your part, as children in Christ’s army, in expanding his kingdom**.

Support to fight the Northern Alliance

1 And it came to pass, when **Jabin king of Hazor** heard these things, that he sent to Jobab **king of Madon**, to the **king of Shimron**, to the **king of Achshaph**, 2 and to the **kings who were from the north**, in the **mountains**, in the **plain** south of Chinneroth, in the **lowland**, and in the **heights** of Dor on the west, 3 to the **Canaanites** in the east and in the west, the **Amorite**, the **Hittite**, the **Perizzite**, the **Jebusite** in the mountains, and the **Hivite** below Hermon in the land of Mizpah. 4 So they went out, **they and all their armies** with them, as many people as the **sand that is on the seashore** in multitude, with very many **horses** and **chariots**. 5 And when all these kings had met together, they came and camped together at the waters of Merom to **fight against Israel**.

1. Jabin (probably a title) a Canaanite king, formed an alliance with many other kings to oppose

God’s people. Jabin was king of one of the largest cities-states in Canaan with more than 40,000 people. It was along an important trade route in upper Galilee. Jabin recruited allies from the East and the West as well. He heard what God did to the nations before, but instead of submitting to God, he served his father the Devil. Now forming this alliance 联盟 was a humongous undertaking 一个巨大的承诺. These nations, really city states, were different from each other and often fought against each other. Their unity showed an immense 巨大 commitment and unity of purpose. Their purpose was to eliminate Israel from the face of the earth. (War makes strange bedfellows 同床异梦! Pilate and Herod, enemies, joined to put Christ to death.) It is often difficult for two countries to agree about anything, and these small city-states were often ruled by egomaniacs 自大狂, so you get a sense of how determined they were to destroy Israel. The alliance was large. Josephus tells us that the army of the Canaanites consisted of 300,000 foot 步兵 soldiers 10,000 horses, and 20,000 chariots 战车, but that might have been a conservative estimate. These chariots could run through and kill many soldiers in one pass as there were scythes 镰刀 on the side. What was obvious was that the alliance was better equipped than Israel. Israel had only foot soldiers!

But God in heaven laughed at their plot. (Psalm 2) By his word the heavens and earth were made, and by his words the heavens and the earth could be destroyed. Canaan's 400 years of rebellion was coming to an end. Canaan's 400 years of occupying the land that God gave to his people was coming to an end. Canaan refused to repent.

Psalm 37:12 The wicked plots against the just, And gnashes 咬牙切齿 at him with his teeth. 13 The Lord laughs at him, For He sees that his day is coming.

6 But the LORD said to Joshua, "**Do not be afraid** because of them, for tomorrow about this time I will deliver all of them slain 诛戮 before Israel. You shall hamstring 使残废 their horses and burn their chariots with fire."

2. Surely this large enemy alliance would have made Israel nervous, maybe afraid, so God had to reassure them of his presence and help. Should their faith have been weak? No. God had given them victory of Jericho – one nation, then victory over Ai and Bethel, then victory over the 5 kings who were buried in the cave. But now there were more than 10 nations against them. Now this progressive work of God should have built up their faith, but it seems that their faith was overcome by their sight. Fresh **dangers require fresh encouragements!** So God reassured them that he was with them and that he would destroy their enemies. God even told them when they would defeat their enemies and how. So when they saw God's word come true, their faith was made stronger...like all miracles do!

Psalm 20:6 Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven With the saving strength of His right hand. 7 **Some trust in chariots, and some in horses**; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God. 8 **They have bowed down and fallen**; But we have risen and stand upright.

Successes in fighting the Northern Alliance

7 So Joshua and all the people of war with him **came against them suddenly** by the waters of Merom, and they attacked them.

1. With the Word of God proclaimed to the people, and their faith strengthened, they marched to war against this overwhelming army which had soldiers as the sand on the seashore. Joshua did not allow his natural inclinations to determine his actions. He let the Word of God determine his actions. He knew that with faith he could move mountains. (And if God wasn't in it, they were bound to be destroyed.) He and Israel attacked the enemies suddenly, causing mass confusion. Maybe the nations expected Israel to negotiate for peace with them when Israel saw their size, but Israel knew that it was not with might nor by power was the war won, but by the working of God's Spirit.

8 And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who defeated them and chased them to Greater Sidon, to the Brook Misrephoth, and to the Valley of Mizpah eastward; they attacked them until they left none of them remaining. 9 So Joshua did to them as the LORD had told him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

2. And the Lord delivered the mighty alliance into his people's hands. All those nations were destroyed. Israel hamstrung their horses (maimed 致残 them, which allowed them to reproduce for Israel) and burned their chariots with fire.

3. Notice how human responsibility worked together to accomplish God's task. There is no explanation how they work together. They simply do. God works, you work! You simply must let God's pleasure drive you.

Further, you must never excuse your responsibility and wait for God to work miracles. God rarely sends hailstones on enemies of his people as he did to the 5 nation alliance before. So do your work!

Oliver Cromwell: Keep your trust in God and keep your powder dry.

4. Why did Israel destroy the chariots and hamstring the horses? Were those precious commodities to treasure?

The nations trusted in their chariots and their horses to be their saviors. God wanted them to know otherwise!

Psalm 33:17 A horse is a vain hope for safety; Neither shall it deliver any by its great strength.

But why maim the horses? Animals suffer because of man's sin – here, the Canaanite sins. A man's sins affect his whole household. Don't let modern animal worship (not as idols, but as pets), make you feel sentimental. Animals were made for your benefit. That is why we roast, brand, spay, neuter, and use animals for clothing – all kinds of animals. This is why we kill and cook animals. What you find cute might be someone's curry. Your sheep dog can be someone's stew dog. There were no pet cemeteries墓地 in the Bible. It is interesting that while these healthy animals could have made Israel rich, God did not want them to trust in their wealth. So this was a spiritual decision by God.

10 Joshua turned back at that time and took Hazor, and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor was formerly the head of all those kingdoms. 11 And they struck all the people who were in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them. There was none left breathing. Then he burned Hazor with fire. 12 So all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua took and struck with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded. 13 But as for the cities that stood on their mounds, Israel burned none of them, except Hazor only, which Joshua burned. 14 And all the spoil of these cities and the livestock, the children of Israel took as booty for themselves; but they struck every man with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them, and they left none breathing.

5. Then Israel enjoyed success over Hazor and some neighboring nations, destroying all who lived there. He burned Hazor with fire.

This was of particular significance. They led the alliance against God's people and God wanted Israel to have a memorial of his love for them at that place. The other cities were not destroyed. God had promised to give them cities they did not build. And God gave Israel the spoils of these nations (gold, silver, household goods, corn, wine, oil, or any mercantile goods, together with cattle and other animals). These nations saved up for what Israel inherited. Numerous near-eastern records confirm these destruction as well as archeological考古学的 finds.

Common grace (not saving grace), grace that God gives to all men, will be the ground for God's judgment against any nation or person, who does not seek to honor God. For instance, the great wealth that God has given to Japan would become the ground for greater punishment if they don't turn to the Lord.

21 And at that time Joshua came and cut off the Anakim from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. 22 None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod.

6. Israel defeated the Anakim from the mountains. These were the great warriors – the giants – giants not just in size but in skill. (Numbers 13:33) They terrified 10 of Israel’s spies 38 years before. They lived in deep caves, but weren’t safe there either. Remember where the giant Goliath was from?

15 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.

7. Israel’s success was tied to their obedience.

Stability in the Whole Land

16 Thus Joshua took all this land: the mountain country, all the South, all the land of Goshen, the lowland, and the Jordan plain—the mountains of Israel and its lowlands, 17 from Mount Halak and the ascent上坡路to Seir, even as far as Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. **He captured all their kings, and struck them down and killed them.**

1. After defeating the nations in the north and the south and capturing much of the land that God had given to Israel, Israel enjoyed relative peace. The South was already in their control. Some find it unacceptable that God gave Canaan to his people. But would you not fight someone who goes in a house that your father left for you and takes over it? Would you honor your father if you simply give away the house for which he worked? So you see why Israel had to do what they did? Those who reject God’s Word are rejecting the sovereignty of God.

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

2. And yet, Israel did not capture all the land at once. It was a progressive victory. The battle continued for many years, at least 7. (We can count this by Caleb’s age.) God did not want Israel to become complacent自满. Ill: See how young people have little understanding of major wars and often don’t appreciate the sacrifices of many.

In this case, Israel could not occupy the land at on time lest the land be **overgrown with trees** and **overtaken by wild animals**. This delay was also helpful so Israel **could be more skillful in war**. This delay was necessary for Israel **to learn patience**. This delay was necessary for Israel to **learn to trust God more**. So as they fought, God slowly expanded them.

Today you must keep in mind that while you have rest in Jesus Christ, you must continue a lifelong battle against sin in your life and labor for sanctification. You must be involved in a lifelong battle for salvation for the non-believer and labor to spread the Gospel. And learn to wait for full expansion of the kingdom! Disney is the magic kingdom – not the church.

19 **There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel,** except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All the others they took in battle. 20 For it was of the **LORD to harden their hearts**, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, and that they might receive no mercy, but that He might destroy them, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

3. Sadly, not one single city state made peace with God and his people...not one! They chose to fight rather than submit to the God of heaven – even after they saw Jericho, Ai, Bethel and the 5 other nations destroyed! They were like Pharaoh after 9 plagues瘟疫in Egypt! God left them alone to literally “strengthen” their own hearts (this is what “God hardened their hearts” mean). **Their refusal to submit to God was the ground on which they were destroyed.**

If the world rejects conversion to Christ and find hope in him, they will be condemned 谴责 and find hell.

23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Then the land rested from war.

4. Then ownership of Canaan was clearly defined, much to the consternation 惊愕 of Muslims. The land as an inheritance to Israel...as Moses had said to Joshua...and as God had said to Moses.

Deuteronomy 6:10 "So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build,

5. While Joshua gave his people temporary rest for their bodies and minds, there was need for one who would give spiritual rest...the true General of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ, who captured sin, death, and hell on the cross. Joshua was only a type of Christ. Jesus is the true Rest Giver...who gives eternal rest!

Hebrews 4:8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 **There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.** 10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

And you will win! The church will triumph. Fight for this kingdom. Christ will triumph. The world is his!

Conclusion:

God promised that he will extend his kingdom and he is willing and able to do that. And God is pleased to use you as part of building his army.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Are you pleased? If you find that you are not pleased to play your part, or you are not working, you need to ask God to remind you who you are and what he did for you.
2. And where do you work to build God's army? Does it have to be in Africa? Maybe. But God if God has placed you in a marriage, or in a school, or in a church, then work for the kingdom there. Don't think of Africa when there is Scarborough in front of you!
3. And know that the Lord is with you. Ex 33:2 "And I will send *My* Angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite." And he is there to protect you. De 9:3 "Therefore understand today that the LORD your God *is* He who goes over before you *as* a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the LORD has said to you.

Finally, the foolish man fights against God. The wise man fights for him. The fool loses. The wise he rewards. Which side do you chose? He offers you to come to his side because Jesus Christ died for sinners like you.