

ISRAEL CONQUERED ALL THE KINGS OF CANAAN

Joshua 11:1-23

Key Verse: 11:12

"Joshua took all these royal cities and their kings and put them to the sword. He totally destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded."

Now, we are going on with the study of the book of Joshua. In the last passage, General Joshua and his army defeated five kings and General Joshua's army commanders were all summoned to put their feet on the necks of the kings one by one. It was to plant a sense of victory in the commanders under General Joshua. General Joshua had brought the kings out from the cave and hung them on trees until they were eaten by crows and vultures. This means that those who are against God will be eaten up by crows and vultures. This also tells us that punishment is so severe to those who are against God; they are punished even after death. We do not see God, so many don't revere God. This is exactly described by a child who covers his eyes with his fingers and says, "I don't see the sky." This is also unfaithful man's wretchedness. They say, "I don't see God, so it's okay to commit sin against God." They are liars. God's divine quality is in them, but still they pretend that they do not know God. Self-deception is the most miserable element in human life. It may be good to deceive another in order to gain some benefits out of his selfishness. But to deceive oneself is the most stupid thing in the world. Those who do not see God and deceive themselves will be like the five kings whose necks were trodden by commanders under General Joshua and who were hung on the trees to be eaten by crows and vultures and all kinds of flying snakes.

In this passage we learn that General Joshua confronts the entire war against all the kings in Palestine. In army strategy, firepower and well-trained soldiers are the crucial elements of victory. But even General Joshua was not well-trained. It is seen in his lack of prayer before fighting with enemies. His soldiers all had slave mentalities after 400 years in Egypt. But they were God's chosen people. God was with them. Anyway, this war of all the enemy kings against Israel was totally inconceivable. But General Joshua did not hesitate to fight this war against the entire enemies of his people Israel. Let's see how General Joshua defeated all the kings of Palestine.

First, the enemies as numerous as the sand on the seashore (1-5).

Verses 1-5 describe what was called the Palestine region or Canaan. At that time the king of Hazor was the leading figure over the Canaanite kings. Look at the first part of verse 1. "When Jabin king of Hazor heard of this...." What did he hear? He heard that General Joshua completely crumbled and destroyed the fortress of Jericho, which was known as the first fortress and the strongest fortress in the land of Canaan. Next, he heard that the people of Ai were defeated. What made him mad was that the Gibeonites, great fighters, surrendered to General Joshua as their survival strategy. Next, five kings of the third fortress of Canaan were hung on trees, and the king of Hazor's anger burned his head. His heart was completely frustrated. Moreover, his fear smeared in his heart more and more. Without any strategy, the king of Hazor summoned all the Canaanite kings. As the last part of verse 10 says in parentheses, "Hazor had been the head of all these kingdoms." We come to know that

there were many kingdoms. But the king of Hazor was the commanding figure at that time. He was beside himself. Let's look at the second part of verse 1 through verse 5. "...he sent word to Jobab king of Madon, to the kings of Shimron and Acshaph, and to the northern kings who were in the mountains, in the Arabah south of Kinnereth, in the western foothills and in Naphoth Dor on the west; to the Canaanites in the east and west; to the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites and Jebusites in the hill country; and to the Hivites below Hermon in the region of Mizpah. They came out with all their troops and a large number of horses and chariots—a huge army, as numerous as the sand on the seashore. All these kings joined forces and made camp together at the Waters of Merom, to fight against Israel."

The king of Hazor had the backing of such a mighty army from subordinate kings and he himself had a great army. He had to fear nothing, but send tidings to the king of each country. His voice was completely gone. Next, he brought a map and pointed with his commander's baton at which king to whom each messenger must run. Finally, he got them all together. The author of Joshua says they were like a huge army, as numerous as the sand on the seashore (4). They had enough army power to destroy one nation Israel and its general, Joshua. But fear crept in. The king of Hazor remained in his palace; only subordinate kings and armies were sent to fight against General Joshua's army. The king of Hazor went to dig a tunnel in which he could hide, with a ventilation shaft so he could breathe, like Stalin, who had a Hitler phobia and lived in a tunnel residence for four years. Their tragedy was fear. But there is more. They were without God. God is Spirit. God is power. God is victory. They had soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. But from the beginning, the king of Hazor was like a dead man. When Napoleon Bonaparte invaded

Russia, the Russian people did not fight against Napoleon's army. They all ran away. So Napoleon's army won the victory before fighting. After that, the French government made a beautiful and huge memorial arch for Napoleon. Still it is there. One characteristic saying of people of the world is, "I am smart. I am making a lot of money." Or, "I have a lot of money." But paper money does not give them spirit; instead, it gives unquenchable fear in their hearts. Recently, we bought a building. The grandmother landlady did not leave a will out of fear that she was going to lose. She wished to live with her old, but very handsome boyfriend forever in the world. But she died. The widow landlady should have depended on God rather than a leechlike boyfriend, who is also dying day by day.

Once, the South Korean army pursued the North Korean army from Seoul to Pyongyang and the Am Nok River. Even President Dr. Lee went to Pyongyang to see the victory of the South Korean army. But President Dr. Lee had to hurriedly come back to Seoul. It was because Chinese soldiers, who looked like sand on the seashore, were progressing forward against the Korean and American joint army. The joint army was greatly scared. The entire joint army of Americans and Koreans was ordered to retreat. It was because the commander of the army was frightened. Some valiant unknown fellows among Koreans remained in Pyongyang and fought against the Chinese army. They saw a funny thing: From each Chinese soldier who was shot, first, money from a money belt carried around his waist, burst out. What a tragedy! In China in the past those who had money could have as many wives as they could afford, by giving a dowry. Those who did not have money could not have a dream to marry. So half were married and half were unmarried. But at the time, the Chinese army was

supporting the North Korean army. Each of the soldiers carried his dowry money in a money belt around his waist. We felt more sorry that South Korea retreated back to Seoul than that the Chinese soldiers' dowry money was all blown up when they were shot. The Chinese soldiers said, "Oh, my money! Oh, my marriage! Oh, my possible fiancé!" And they died, bleeding from their mouths and noses and stomachs. The Chinese soldiers were as numerous as the stars in the sky at that time, about two million. Frankly speaking, they were not like soldiers, because unmarried people treasured dowry money more than fighting. The main reason was that they were not fighting for themselves, but fighting as mercenaries against South Korea, contrary to Confucius' training and teaching. Anyway, so many Chinese soldiers died by machine gun fire and bombing from the air and the resistant South Korean army. The northern kings under the command of King Hazor were comparable to the Chinese soldiers who fought to support North Korea without any meaning of fighting. But the kings of Palestine wanted to keep the land and survive. Because of their fear, they got together. In the past, they had never gotten together because of political differences and benefit differences. But this time, to overcome their fear, they got together and they were ready to fight against the army of Israel under the command of General Joshua.

[Map of the Promised Land] [Map of the Northern Campaign]

By destroying 31 kings, Joshua conquered the promised land

Second, General Joshua did to them as the Lord had directed (6-11).

General Joshua and the whole Israelite army came against them

suddenly at the Waters of Merom and attacked them. General Joshua was fearless. And General Joshua was God's general. General Joshua's rock-like confidence was that they won the victory before fighting. So General Joshua was ready to fight against them. He tapped his right arm with his left hand and checked to see if his right arm was strong enough to slay the enemies, who were as numerous as the sand on the seashore.

At that time God spoke to Joshua thunderously. Look at verse 6. "The Lord said to Joshua, 'Do not be afraid of them, because by this time tomorrow I will hand all of them over to Israel, slain. You are to hamstring their horses and burn their chariots.'" Here, we learn that General Joshua, because of his experience in many victories, was overconfident. But fighting is fighting. In a boxing match, even if the opponent is far inferior, the champion's fear is still great. That is the responsive fear of all men. So God said to General Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them." The enemy strategy was the 'human sea wave' strategy. Therefore, it must be that General Joshua thought about the number of their army forces and that after the battle with the five kings, they had to confront the entire united Canaanite army. He must be ready to fight a life and death battle and thus render glory to God. But the Lord said, "Do not be afraid, little Josh, because by this time tomorrow I will hand all of them over to Israel, slain." In other words, God would kill them. God's order continued, "You are to hamstring their horses and burn their chariots." We have to think about God's command a little more, later. As soon as Joshua heard God Almighty's command, General Joshua's heart was filled with power and spirit. He felt that his left arm was like a steel arm. He also felt that his commanders' left arms were rocky arms. In other words, after receiving God's command

he became mighty strong.

So General Joshua and his whole army came against them suddenly at the Waters of Merom and attacked them, and the Lord gave them into the hand of Israel. General Joshua and the army of Israel defeated them and pursued them all the way to Greater Sidon, to Misrephoth Maim and to the Valley of Mizpah on the east, until no survivors were left. Joshua did to them as the Lord had directed: He hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots (7-9). Horses are very important supporters of the army. But Joshua hamstrung all the horses of the kings of Canaanites united under the king of Hazor. Not only did he hamstring the good weapon-like horses, he also burned their chariots.

General Joshua's obedience to God's word had grown; he was a matchless general in the sight of God. His people were like the strong soldiers who might conquer the whole Canaanite territory. Their spirit, and the power of God in their hearts was indeed great. When we see a useful thing, we want to pick it up. One boy was very poor. He had never had money. But on the street he discovered a bundle of money. So he picked it up and sent it to his elder brother in Japan during World War II. It is human sinful nature. What a surprise that General Joshua hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots! As a general, he knew that horses run fast and are the best animals in charging the enemies. General Joshua knew this very well. But he only depended on God Almighty, and with weeping, obeyed God's command and hamstrung their horses, which were almost the same in number as his army. A chariot is indeed a good weapon, as we know. But he also burned the chariots to the ground, not saving one even for himself. I agree that General Joshua deserved

a chariot as the commander of the whole Israelite army. But he remained as a foot soldier and destroyed innumerable enemy chariots.

We can say that General Joshua obeyed God's command absolutely, no matter what the future might be, victory or defeat. He gambled his victory in obedience to God. It is a story. So it is easy to hear. But in practice, this obedience is so difficult and very difficult. The other day Dr. Lee asked one lady to lend us her computer in the midst of typesetting our newsletter. She refused. She is a woman of obedience to God. But she did not know obedience to her senior. So Dr. Lee learned that she was lonely and attached to her computer so much. Then he thought he was rude to ask to borrow her computer. Dr. Lee deeply repented that night.

Since Dr. Lee cannot live forever, he has been looking for a successor for the last ten years. Because of his favor as a successor candidate, one person became an enemy of God. Another one was a Korea Military Academy professor and a one-star general candidate. Dr. Lee invited him and helped him get a green card. The problem was that he had been teaching students and he had too many ideas about UBF. He was not going to learn Dr. Lee's direction. He said many things, such as, "Well, if I take over UBF, I will make American UBF the same as Korean UBF." That's nonsense. Korean UBF imitates American UBF from one to ten. So the professor didn't know what was going on. In order to win others' favor, he was listening to all the complaints, staying up late so many nights. He agreed with the complaints. So he was dismissed as a possible candidate to be Dr. Lee's successor. He needed forty years of wilderness training under Jethro. But he did not attend UBF during

his college years. Suddenly he jumped into UBF after marriage with a woman who was a UBF member. He was only honored and served by Korean UBF people. In the past, Dr. Lee wanted to teach one shepherd to speak a few words during meal time. It took three years. He is now a leading messenger in Chicago UBF. These days Dr. Lee is helping a Russian born American to speak a few words during meal time. It has taken two years already, but it doesn't work. But Dr. Lee wants to train him to be the best table talker, like Queen Elizabeth, Billy Graham, and Winston Churchill.

Obedience is so difficult. Joshua desperately needed many horses and chariots for his army to defeat all the kings and residents of Canaan. But according to God's command, he hamstringed the horses so that they could not run at all. He also burned their chariots, which were comparable to modern German tanks. Obedience is not easy. There is no one who has inborn obedience. Obedience should be learned. Even our Lord Jesus Christ learned obedience through much suffering. Hebrews 5:8 says, "Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered...." Our Lord Jesus Christ is the one and only Son of God Almighty. He didn't have to come down to this cursed world and lay in a manger when he was born. But according to the world salvation plan, he came to this world where there are only sorrowful people and fatalistic people and wicked people, tormenting themselves with guilt and shame. Especially, he came to this world to be friends with people who are very fatalistic because of their sins, like French people.

Look at verse 10. "At that time Joshua turned back and captured Hazor and put its king to the sword. (Hazor had been the head of all these kingdoms.)" As we studied, the king of Hazor was the most powerful king.

And he was the leader over all the other kings. After absolute obedience to God's command by hamstringing horses and burning chariots, only by faith in God, General Joshua attacked the king of Hazor and his army and put its king to the sword. The mighty army under the king of Hazor was put to the sword. The army of Israel totally destroyed them, not sparing anything that breathed, and burned up the city of Hazor itself. General Joshua did to them as the Lord had directed.

Third, General Joshua was a man of learning mind (12-13).

Look at verses 12-13. "Joshua took all these royal cities and their kings and put them to the sword. He totally destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded. Yet Israel did not burn any of the cities built on their mounds—except Hazor, which Joshua burned." It is natural that the general who conquered the entire land of Canaan and all of its kings be proud of himself; he can put one more star on his shoulder like General Patton, who did so even before his promotion was passed by Congress. In the last part of verse 12, we find the phrase, "...as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded." This phrase has deep background and meaning. Before entering the promised land, where the Canaanites were living, God taught Moses what to do. Deuteronomy 7:1-2 says, "When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you—and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy." In these verses, we learn that God taught Moses not to compromise

with the Gentiles in the promised land. He did this not one time, but several times. Exodus 23:20-23 says, "See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion, since my Name is in him. If you listen carefully to what he says and do all that I say, I will be an enemy to your enemies and will oppose those who oppose you. My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites, and I will wipe them out." In these verses, we learn that the chosen people Israel should not compromise with the Gentile culture or become greedy, looking at their fancy gold rings and diamond necklaces and nose rings made in India. At that time, the land of the Canaanites was frequently visited by traders from Egypt and China. God clearly ordered his people not to depend on enemies' weapons or horses. Moses taught this to the Israelites; Joshua heard this and remembered. But he did not practice it up until now, not to mention praying to obey Moses' command. But when General Joshua became stronger and stronger, and became a man who conquered the world, he remembered Moses' teaching by God Almighty. Regardless of victory or defeat, he obeyed and fought. He even defeated the chief king of Hazor and his entire army. We can learn obedience through the word of God. We can grow in obedience to God to the degree of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shed his blood on a tree for our sins to be washed away.

These days, obedience has become taboo to American people. But we must know that the antonym of obedience is rebellion or rebelliousness. These days, rebellious people and lazy people corrupt the fibre of this nation. Those who carry on a rebellious life understand what suffering

means very well. Instead of looking at each other, we must look at God and hear his word and learn obedience to his word. We must pray that America may come back to real America, like in the past, and that her people may be obedient to God and hardworking for God.

Fourth, Joshua totally destroyed them as Moses commanded (14-15).

Look at the first part of verse 14. "The Israelites carried off for themselves all the plunder and livestock of these cities...." When Joshua obeyed Moses' command from God, his people could enjoy eating gourmet food. General Joshua also learned from Moses that in the entire war against Palestine, "After victory, you can bring spoils." Always, obedience is hard to practice. But after obedience, God's abundant blessing follows. After great victory, the Israelites carried off for themselves all the plunder and livestock of the cities. When we read verse 15, we learn that they carried off plunder, as the Lord commanded his servant Moses. Moses commanded Joshua, and Joshua did it; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses. When General Joshua was inexperienced in generalship, he did not carefully regard God's words and omitted prayer. But here we learn that when he became highly exalted he did not become proud. Rather, he became very humble and very loyal. He also let his people enjoy a lot of plunder, eating "yum, yum, yum, yum, yum, yum" and let them wear nose rings from Egypt, too, made of elephants' tusks.

Fifth, General Joshua conquered the entire Palestine in a day (16-23).

If we look back at verse 6, we find that General Joshua's victory

would take one day. Even capturing five kings and their inhabitants took a full two days with no sleep. But when General Joshua grew, by remembering the word of God and getting more humble, he could conquer the land of the Canaanites in a day. So General Joshua took this entire land: the hill country, all the Negev, the whole region of Goshen, the western foothills, the Arabah and the mountains of Israel with their foothills, from Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir, to Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon (16). He captured all the kings and struck them down one by one. The leftover Palestinian nations hardened their hearts, except one. And Joshua struck them to death.

General Joshua's victory was thorough. At that time, Joshua went and destroyed the Anakites from the hill country: from Hebron, Debir and Anab, from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua totally destroyed them and their towns. So Joshua took the entire land just as the Lord had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war. The amazing thing is that Joshua did not try to build a palace for himself as a conqueror of Canaan, that is, the promised land. It is natural; in history one who won an entire war was supposed to have a castle for himself as a symbol of being a leader. But General Joshua did not. He had a plan to allot all the land to the tribes of Israel so that they may live in the promised land, learn God's way, and grow up to be a shepherd nation and Bible teachers with the broken shepherd heart of God.

In God we have victory. But like Joshua, we must grow in obedience to God's word. We must stick to God's word and Moses' training so that

we may be truly useful to God in this wandering generation.