

At this point in the book of Joshua we have long lists of battles and the boundaries of the different tribes. We are not going to read over it all. Many of the place names are unknown to us today. I am going to hit some of the highlights and the overarching principle which is that **God is faithful to keep His promises, but we need to cooperate with Him to receive the fullness of the blessings He wants to give us.** When we don't, we end up suffering the consequences of our lack of submission to Jesus.

The campaign to defeat the cities of the Negev in chapter 10 verses 29 to 43 probably took months. We have a brief summary in those verses. Town after town fell to Israel's forces and were devoted to destruction. Israel was successful because, as is declared in verse 42, the LORD God fought for Israel.

The justice of God is something that the fallen nature of God does not like to consider. Can God decide when a person or nation has come to a place where they will never return from rebellion against all that is good? He does every day. He has numbered our days (Job 14:4ⁱ). Each of us continues to live because either we have not grown so hardened, or we are still growing in grace to prepare ourselves for eternity in His presence. We cannot say when it is the right time for a person to die. Perhaps God spares people by taking them before they make wrong decisions. We must leave that to God and trust He knows each of our hearts better than we know our own.

But there will come a day when our world like that of the Amorites will find their iniquity reaches God's limit (Genesis 15:16ⁱⁱ). There will be a day when the army of heaven does to the whole world what Joshua did to the Negev (Revelation 19:15ⁱⁱⁱ). Thankfully, there will be an end to evil and rebellion against God. But that will only come after those who survive those days live under the perfect reign of Christ on earth and then are willingly deceived for the last time to follow Lucifer in an attack upon God.

We would like to think, as many religions and cults do, that someday everyone will receive the love of God. That is what God desires, but the prophets, including Jesus, say it just won't happen (Mark 9:43^{iv}). They predict a final battle when the entire world will unite to fight against the return of Christ (Revelation 16:14^v). The vast majority of the world will have sworn allegiance to the antichrist who promises peace and prosperity but also demands that the world worship him. He will make war on those who worship Jesus and try to annihilate them (Revelation 13:7,8^{vi}; Daniel 7:21^{vii}). The heart of man is desperately evil (Jeremiah 17:9^{viii}), and the antichrist will certainly stroke the egos of all who will join him. He will present himself as the answer to all our problems, a superhero.

A false prophet will cause people to worship the antichrist and will even show miraculous signs (Revelation 13:13,14^{ix}). People will not be deceived because he is so clever, but rather because he will tell them what they want to hear (2 Timothy 4:3^x). He will claim that no repentance is needed, nothing will be called sinful, except to oppose him. He will tell the world they should do as they wish and forget all the taboos of ancient religions. Jesus said it will be like the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37^{xi}). At that time, the thoughts of men's hearts were only evil continually (Genesis 6:5^{xii}). He compared those coming days to the days of Lot (Luke 17:28^{xiii}). The men of the city were so lustful that even when struck with blindness they tried to commit vile acts. The destruction by the flood, the brimstone from heaven upon Sodom, as well as this section of Joshua all foreshadow that coming judgment on the entire world (Ecclesiastes 1:9^{xiv}).

We all wish that everyone would see the destructiveness of trying to be our own god, but we cannot make people see what they refuse to see. Jesus came to set the captives free, but many prefer enslavement to their passions. We can be sure God will give us every chance to turn from lies to the truth, from darkness to light (Ezekiel 33:11^{xv}). But some will never accept any lord but self. Some people even proudly declare that if God would condemn people to hell, they don't want Him as their God.

Just as Rahab and Gibeon chose to ally themselves with the God of Israel, so we too have that choice. Every city in Canaan had that choice. Even after hearing of all the mighty things God had done for Israel, they chose to fight against Israel's God. So will it be at the end of this age. Thank God that we have bowed to the King who loves us and gave Himself for us. His grace helped us open our eyes. By His grace we chose Him and now we are growing increasingly into His likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18^{xvi}).

This section of Joshua was a physical battle, but it had deep spiritual roots. God's command through Moses was to tear down their places of worship and their idols (Deuteronomy 7:3-5^{xvii}; 12:2,3^{xviii}). God knew Israel wouldn't finish the job, and so He added the command not to intermarry with them lest they cause Israel to worship their gods. If they disobeyed, Israel would become idolatrous and deserve the same fate. At different stages in the nation's history many did so, and the nation eventually did go into captivity just as Moses predicted.

You can fight against God, or you can surrender to His goodness and experience His grace. It is a matter of where your allegiance lies in this spiritual battle over the souls of mankind.

Because our old nature never truly leaves us while we are in this life, we will often try to blend both worlds. We are great at justifying or reasoning things to be other than what Scripture declares them to be. We choose beliefs that let us do as we please apart from God and then add some worship, a little Bible study, and some prayer with those beliefs. That is just like Israel's later years when they came to the temple and made their sacrifices while blatantly disobeying what God instructed them to do (Malachi 1:7^{xix}). They will make offerings to other gods right in sight of the temple. But God is described as a jealous God (Exodus 20:5^{xx}). He is not jealous like mankind is for selfish reasons, but instead He is jealous for our good and for truth. When we blend the old nature and other religions with what Jesus has done for us, He will discipline us as He did Israel.

When the southern coalition was defeated, the kings of the north joined forces to try to resist Israel. God again encouraged Joshua: *⁶ 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."* ⁷ *So Joshua and all his warriors came suddenly against them by the waters of Merom and fell upon them.* ⁸ *And the LORD gave them into the hand of Israel,* Joshua 11:6-8a "Do not be afraid!" This huge coalition of forces with superior weaponry is coming against you but there is no need to fear. God and one are a majority! The Lord gave the victory, and He will give us the victory in the spiritual realm as well (Psalm 60:12^{xxi}).

When the antichrist is killing Christians, we will not need to fear. That is because our Joshua will be victorious in the end. Jesus commanded us not to fear those who kill the body but have no more that they can do. He said that we should fear the One who can destroy soul and body in hell (Matthew 10:28^{xxii}). If we fear anything, it should be fearing that our weaknesses will turn us against Jesus by compromising the truth, and then be

judged for that rebellion. But we have a promise that Jesus will finish what He started in us (Philippians 1:6^{xxiii}). We know He is a good Shepherd and doesn't lose His sheep (John 18:9^{xxiv}). But make every effort to not wander off and be in need of discipline.

I asked in previous sermons why the people of the land would fight a force whose God could drop giant walls flat and stop a river at flood stage. Why would they resist when hailstones from heaven killed more of their enemies than swords did? The answer is in verse 20. *²⁰ 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.* Joshua 11:20 God hardened their hearts. It was the same with Pharaoh. The account of Pharaoh's resistance against God gives us a clue as to what was happening in Canaan. Pharaoh hardened his own heart numerous times before God hardened it.

Man can yield without surrendering. In essence, that is what Pharaoh did. He let the people go but then went after them with his army. If the nations, other than the Gibeonites had surrendered and become slaves, Israelites would soon be worshiping their idols. God hardened the enemy's hearts because He knew they would not change. I believe He does the same today. I witness debates where the liberal humanist is defeated at every turn but still walks away pridefully thinking he won. When a person is beyond the point of no return and determined to rebel, God will harden their heart to their own destruction.

²³ 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. Joshua 11:23 Because Scripture tells us that all these things happened as examples for us (1 Corinthians 10:6^{xxv}), let us consider the spiritual application. We also have the promises of God and a divine inheritance (2 Peter 1:4^{xxvi}; 1 Peter 1:4^{xxvii}). And we have a great enemy who would like to keep us from taking the land. He, like the Canaanites, is under the wrath of God, devoted to destruction. Like them, his heart is hardened to a point of no return. He knows he will lose for he has seen the mighty hand of God, and yet he attacks us with his legions.

However, we have been promised to be victorious, for the same power that worked for Israel is working for us. The LORD will give us the victory. That doesn't mean that we won't have battles or suffer. Considering the age of Caleb, we can estimate these battles took seven years. Unlike the battle with the southern kings, God did not send hail to assist in the battle. It was up to the men of Israel using their swords. We use the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, to fight our battles, just as our commander Jesus did when tempted in the wilderness (Ephesians 6:17^{xxviii}; Matthew 4:4^{xxix}).

We too are told not to fear, for Jesus, our Joshua, has already given the enemy into our hands, for greater is He who is in you than He who is in the world (1John 4:4^{xxx}).

¹⁹ Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. ²⁰ Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:19,20).

We show no mercy to the influence of the world, to our old nature, and the devil. Those influences are to be given no quarter in our lives. If we cling to the things devoted to destruction, then like Achan, we put ourselves under their curse. But if we fight on until our hearts are cleared of all the idolatrous influences, we too will have rest from

war. Our Joshua, Jesus, will give us our inheritance, heavenly homes we did not build, but that He has prepared for us (Joshua 24:13^{xxxii}; John 14:2^{xxxiii}).

Chapter 12 gives a list of all the lands the Israelites conquered on both sides of the Jordan River. Joshua did all that the LORD commanded through Moses. He is a foreshadow of Jesus who did all that the Father commanded Him. However, some of the tribes did not finish the work assigned to them. God predicted this through Moses and warned them not to intermarry or worship their idols (Deuteronomy 7:3,4^{xxxiii}).

We can have our own list of victories. Our battle is not seven years, but since seven represents completeness, we are to see it as our whole life. The victories we rack up are over our old nature and helping others be victorious. It would be a good exercise to journal victories the LORD gives you. Let me give you examples: 7/1/19 - victory over the temptation to lust when the king of sexual fantasy was put to death at Slide Rock State Park. 12/12/20 - victory over greed when I obeyed the Spirit and gave that money to John to help with his rent. There the king of greed was executed in Cottonwood. 3/1/21 victory over selfishness about time when I gave the day to help Jim with the work on his house. There I slew the king of "My free time!" You get the idea.

Through verse six we have a list of every victory on the east side of the Jordan while Moses was still living. From verse seven to the end of the chapter the list of the kings Joshua conquered is covered. That concludes the first half of the book.

Chapter 13-21 is the second half, the distribution of the land to the tribes. Chapter 13 focuses on the land given to half the tribe of Manasseh, Gad, and Reuben. The chapter begins with the need to divide the land before Joshua dies for the people respect Joshua's instruction. There was no great leader to follow Joshua, so the tribes could have ended up fighting over the land if it was not divided while Joshua lived.

We are told that the entire land had not yet been conquered. The people that were left will cause most of the problems Israel experiences in the future. One group is the Philistines who live along the coast. They were probably from Crete originally and settled that region by driving the Avvim to the south.

When we come to Christ, we have some mighty victories that start our new life. We have realized our need for forgiveness, our fallen nature, and surrendered our lives to follow our captain. We often begin by giving up some of the obvious things that held us captive. It may take some time, but with God's help we prevail. But then we read in Scripture that there is more to conquer. *"This is the land that yet remains."* We find that we have been given an inheritance, and just like these Israelites, we must go out and take it, knowing that God goes before us.

They had the description of their land like a title deed. We have the description of our land described in the promises of the New Testament. It is a covenant that first of all guarantees eternal life (John 3:36^{xxxiv}). It doesn't just mean living forever. It means being in a right relationship with God and communing with Him forever. That is the land in general, but we each have our specific part. The land that remains to be taken is our calling and gifts within our life/land.

But let us first look at claiming that land of a right relationship and communion with God, for this is where we all begin. Remember that what they first did was to circumcise the males. All who had not been circumcised in the desert entered into that covenant. It pictures a heart that is tender toward God, a heart that readily receives conviction. This was the sign, an outer sign, like baptism is today. We will have some

creek baptisms after church on Easter. Baptism declares we have joined ourselves with those who follow Jesus. It makes us vulnerable like it made them vulnerable. An outward declaration that we have died with Christ and been raised with Him means others will watch to see if it is real. They may mock us, unfriend us, and in some places expel us. In the early church it sometimes meant imprisonment or execution. So, the first step is a new identity. It should be obvious to others that we follow Christ as He becomes our first love. In some regions Christians even take on a new name.

Then there was the first big conquest. Jericho was impenetrable, as are some of our besetting sins, the habitual ones we are convicted to leave behind. The battle seems insurmountable, but Jesus is the victory in us. We shout the victory and watch the walls fall flat. Then it is up to us to destroy any remnant that would connect us to that vanquished sin. We dare not hide any small piece of in our hearts or it will destroy us.

Then in this honeymoon period where we feel so victorious, we face a little town of Ai, a problem we don't think is so big, and we go about trying to put it away. But we find it badly defeats us. We forgot to look to the Lord. We begin learning the lesson that we need to pray and seek God's direction from the Bible and the Spirit. The lesson is reinforced when we found we made a compromise we thought was insignificant but turned out to be with us for the rest of our life. That was pictured in the Gibeonite deception.

There are other major areas ahead that we can see in the battles with the northern kings. These can be major areas of our life, such as marriage and our occupation. How do we follow Christ in those areas where so many are defeated? Just like we did with Jericho and Ai, we get God's battle plans.

But now we have come to taking our inheritance in the land, or we could say in the body of Christ. This is what half the book deals with (1 Corinthians 12:7^{xxxv}). The lot is cast into the lap, but the Lord determines the outcome (Proverbs 16:33^{xxxvi}). He assigns your place, your gifts, and your calling. And some of these areas that have yet to be taken still have giants to conquer. What church is God leading me to be a part of? What is my part in it? What classes or groups do I attend? How can I help make the church all God means it to be? Where is the need? How do I reach out to others who need to know Jesus' love and forgiveness? And as we begin to search our hearts and observe what God puts before us, with the Spirit's guidance we start to discern our land that is to be taken. That doesn't mean on Sunday only but every day and wherever we happen to be (Colossians 3.17^{xxxvii}).

This final claiming of the land allotted to us is being a vital member of the body of Christ, walking in the Spirit and the calling of God on our life (Galatians 5:25^{xxxviii}). That is when we find that even in all the activity there is rest in our souls. We are doing what God created us to do. We are enjoying fellowship with God and our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are laying up treasures in heaven, teaching disciples how to follow Jesus, and enjoying doing it (Matthew 28:19,20^{xxxix}). Oh, it is work, but it is Christ empowered work. The outcome of our faith will be seen in our lives and the lives of those we influence. We are as close to home as you can experience in this life.

Dear brother and sister in Christ, how much of your promised land yet remains to be taken? What is your calling? Because Jericho and Ai have been conquered there are still battles to fight. Have you found your place of service to the body? Are you marching forward in faith at our Captains commands?

Questions

- 1 Who is the only one who knows when it is the right time to die?
- 2 Will the world as we know it have a happy ending for all?
- 3 What does the Bible say about the fate of most people in the end?
- 4 Why would the antichrist want to kill Christians?
- 5 Why didn't the northern kings surrender?
- 6 Why would God harden their hearts?
- 7 Why would God do such a thing?
- 8 What land was yet to be taken?
- 9 What is the application to our own lives?
- 10 Have you discovered your calling?

ⁱ **Job 14:5 (ESV)**

⁵ Since his days are determined, and the number of his months is with you, and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass,

ⁱⁱ **Genesis 15:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

ⁱⁱⁱ **Revelation 19:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

^{iv} **Mark 9:43 (ESV)**

⁴³ And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.

^v **Revelation 16:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.

^{vi} **Revelation 13:7-8 (ESV)**

⁷ Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, ⁸ and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

^{vii} **Daniel 7:21-22 (ESV)**

²¹ As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom.

^{viii} **Jeremiah 17:9 (ESV)**

⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

^{ix} **Revelation 13:13-14 (ESV)**

¹³ It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people,

¹⁴ and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

^x **2 Timothy 4:3 (ESV)**

³ For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,

^{xi} **Matthew 24:37 (ESV)**

³⁷ For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

^{xii} **Genesis 6:5 (ESV)**

⁵ The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

^{xiii} **Luke 17:28 (ESV)**

²⁸ Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building,

^{xiv} **Ecclesiastes 1:9 (ESV)**

⁹ What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.

^{xv} **Ezekiel 33:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

^{xvi} **2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV)**

¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

^{xvii} **Deuteronomy 7:3-5 (ESV)**

³ You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, ⁴ for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.⁵ But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire.

^{xviii} **Deuteronomy 12:2-3 (ESV)**

² You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.

³ You shall tear down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and burn their Asherim with fire. You shall chop down the carved images of their gods and destroy their name out of that place.

^{xix} **Malachi 1:7 (ESV)**

⁷ By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, 'How have we polluted you?' By saying that the LORD's table may be despised.

^{xx} **Exodus 20:5 (ESV)**

⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me,

^{xxi} **Psalms 60:12 (ESV)**

¹² With God we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes.

^{xxii} **Matthew 10:28 (ESV)**

²⁸ And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

^{xxiii} **Philippians 1:6 (ESV)**

⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

^{xxiv} **John 18:9 (ESV)**

⁹ This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one."

^{xxv} **1 Corinthians 10:6 (ESV)**

⁶ Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.

^{xxvi} **2 Peter 1:4 (ESV)**

⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

^{xxvii} **1 Peter 1:4 (ESV)**

⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,

^{xxviii} **Ephesians 6:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

^{xxix} **Matthew 4:4 (ESV)**

⁴ But he answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

^{xxx} **1 John 4:4 (ESV)**

⁴ Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

^{xxxi} **Joshua 24:13 (ESV)**

¹³ I gave you a land on which you had not labored and cities that you had not built, and you dwell in them. You eat the fruit of vineyards and olive orchards that you did not plant.'

^{xxxii} **John 14:2 (ESV)**

² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

^{xxxiii} **Deuteronomy 7:3-4 (ESV)**

³ You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons,

⁴ for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.

^{xxxiv} **John 3:36 (ESV)**

³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

^{xxxv} **1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV)**

⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

^{xxxvi} **Proverbs 16:33 (ESV)**

³³ The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

^{xxxvii} **Colossians 3:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

^{xxxviii} **Galatians 5:25 (ESV)**

²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

^{xxxix} **Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV)**

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”