
Joshua 11

Joshua 11:1–27

Joshua Conquers Northern Palestine

Outline of Chapter 11:

- Vv. 1–5 **The northern king coalition**
- Vv. 6–9 **Joshua defeats the northern king coalition**
- Vv. 10–15 **Joshua conquers northern Palestine**
- Vv. 16–23 **A retrospective of the conquest of all Israel**

Chart Index:

Introduction: Joshua 11 more or less covers the conquering of the northern kingdom, however, this will not be entirely clear. It won't be like the previous chapter where we have southern city after southern city conquered by the Israelites. Joshua will first face a coalition of the tribes of the north, which is much larger and more experienced than the southern alliance of the previous chapter. This new coalition, Israel will oppose and defeat. Then, the only city mentioned by name in this chapter as one which Joshua defeated is Hazor. The remainder of the northern cities are taken in a wide geographical sweep which describes both the northern and southern areas which Joshua and his men conquered. A summary of the areas which were not conquered, is also given.

One of the things which I had read years ago indicated that the movement of Joshua over the land of Canaan was actually much more peaceful and that the book of Joshua was more of a propaganda tract written hundreds of years later to inspire the people of Israel. On the whole, the commentaries which I dealt with did not even deal with that assertion (as archeology has proven them wrong). However, what is submitted as further evidence is a paragraph or two written by Manfred Barthel, who does not believe in the inspiration of Scripture: *A bloodthirsty tale, this Book of Joshua. Yet it contains a core of valid historical information, even if the chronology is hopelessly confused. For many years, though, German biblical scholars were convinced that the biblical account of the conquest of Canaan was no more than a puffed-up propaganda tract, and that the Israelite settlement of Canaan was actually a peaceful migration into a sparsely settled region whose nomadic inhabitants were occupied elsewhere with the more serious threat posed by "Nordic" invaders on the coast (such as the Philistines). Over the last few decades French archaeologists have provided us with an entirely different picture, in the light of their discoveries at Ras Shamra, the site of the Canaanite city of Ugarit. First of all, the Canaanites were already a settled agricultural people by the fourteen century B.C. Jewelry found in their grave sites is of a very high standard of workmanship. And their religion, the cult of the nature god Baal and his extended family of lesser gods and goddesses, was firmly rooted in the folk culture and everyday life of the Canaanite people. Most important of all—and this came as quite a surprise—the people of Ugarit used a kind of cuneiform script which reduced the unwieldy Sumerian array of hundreds of characters to a mere thirty. Thus, the Canaanites were already well on their way toward inventing the alphabet. But all this does not really explain why this saga of chauvinistic blood and thunder belongs in the Christian Bible. Read the Book of Joshua and you will understand at once. Every verse proclaims the new religion of Jahweh—a God who does not simply manifest himself in the remote forces of nature but who intervenes directly in human affairs, to serve and guide his people. The phrases "and the LORD commanded" and "Joshua spake unto the LORD" occur repeatedly; God has become a decisive force in human history for the first time.*¹ Allowing for several inaccuracies herein, even Barthel is forced to admit to much of the accuracy in the book of Joshua, based upon archeological evidence.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

¹ Manfred Barthel, *What the Bible Really Says*; ©1982; © by Quill; p. 137.

The Northern King Coalition

Literally:

Smoother English rendering:

And so it came to pass as a hearing of Jabin, king of Hazor; and so he sent unto Jobab, a king of Madon and unto a king of Shimron and unto a king of Achshaph; Joshua 11:1

And so it came to pass when Jabin, king of Hazor, heard of all this and he sent a message to Jobab, the king of Madon, to the king of Shimron and to the king of Achshaph;

Jabin was the instigator of the next combined offense against Israel what was occurring in southern Palestine was no secret. Those in the north were fully aware of not only the victories of Joshua, but also that he was executing all of his enemies and burning many of the cities. Jabin ruled over Hazor, a city which had a population of around 40,000, according to the findings of a 1955 excavation by an archeologist named Yadin. Given the size of his army, combined with the coalition of the other forces, this would be the most imposing army yet for Joshua and his men to face. With regards to Jabin, McGee writes: *Jabin of Hazor in the north seems to have been the organizer. He sends out word to all the folk in that area to come against Joshua, because it is obvious now that he has overcome in the south and he is going to move to the north. And if he moved to the north, he will invade their land—which, of course, is exactly what he did.*²

Since the name *Hazor* shows up in a dozen places or more in Scripture, we should examine the word itself. It is, of course, a transliteration from the Hebrew *châtsôr* (חָצוֹר or חָצוֹר) [pronounced *khaw-TSOHR*], which comes from an Hebrew word meaning *enclosure, court, settled abode, settlement, village*; therefore, we should expect to see this particular name in several places referring to several different cities, which is the way the find it. Strong's #2674 BDB #347.

Now Hazor is shown as being far north, ten miles north-northwest of the Sea of Galilee (called Sea of Chinnereth then), barely five miles southwest of a smaller body of water above the Sea of Galilee, called Lake Huleh. Hazor was the largest city of the area of Palestine at that time. It had been originally built in the third millennium B.C. over an area of roughly 25 acres. Below this, during the Hyksos era of Egypt, early in the second millennium, was built a lower city which covered approximately 180 acres of land. This lower city was protected along its western wall by an earthen rampart³ and a deep moat. This hill sat in the middle of a plain, which would have been quite suitable for a people dependent upon horses and chariots. It appears to be the dominant military and political power of Palestine, causing Joshua to note: **Then Joshua turned back at that time, and captured Hazor and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor formerly was the head of all these kingdoms** (Joshua 11:10). Archeology reveals that Hazor fell in the 13th century B.C., thus corroborating the account which Joshua will give in this book. Keller: *Hazor was in fact not only one of the largest settlements of the country but also one of the strongest fortresses. In the 13th century B.C., it was destroyed, as the book of Joshua records. A layer of burnt rubble indicates a great conflagration about that time. Many scholars do not hesitate to attribute this burnt rubble to Joshua and his hosts.*⁴ Joshua will burn the city and lower Hazor would never be rebuilt. The site of the city will be given to the tribe of Naphtali (there is another Hazor mentioned occasionally in Scripture which was on the border between Judah and Benjamin). Because of its geographical characteristics, Solomon will rebuild either a portion of Hazor or the wall itself for protection for an outpost of Israel (I Kings 9:15). We will hear of Hazor being destroyed later throughout the Bible, and surprisingly, the person who comes to the defense of these discrepancies is Manfred Barthel; he writes: *In fact, many different references to the destruction of Hazor are scattered through the Old Testament; biblical scholars had taken this as an instance of editorial carelessness on the part of the authors. But Hazor has now been more thoroughly excavated than almost any other ancient site, by a team of Israeli archaeologists led by Yigael Yadin, former chief of staff of the Israelite army. When General Yadin published the results of their findings, it became clear that these apparently contradictory or redundant accounts of Hazor's destruction were not simply the result of faulty proofreading; they discovered twenty-one different levels of occupation between the*

² J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 70.

³ A rampart is a large earthen fortification around a city which is usually capped with a parapet, which is another wall, made of stone or earth, which is constructed above the rampart.

⁴ Werner Keller, *The Bible as History* (second revised edition), p. 165.

nineteenth and the second centuries B.C. Hazor had already been “destroyed utterly” and subsequently rebuilt perhaps half a dozen times before the Israelites arrive in the Land of Canaan.⁵ Keller indicates that no fewer than 21 stages of development can be distinguished in the city Hazor, indicating that at least 21 cities occupied that same area, each one erected over the rubble of the previous cities.⁶

What is unquestioned is that Hazor, in the 13th century B.C., was laid to rubble. *With its burnt rubble, its layer of ashes and its broken idols, it seems to support the following passage:*⁷ “But Jehovah your God will deliver them [the Canaanites] to you, and He will destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they are destroyed. And He will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will destroy their name from under heaven. There will be no man able to stand before you until you have destroyed them. The graven images of their gods you will burn with fire.” (Deut. 7:23–25).

It appears as though Jabin was the name of a dynasty and it might be a generic title for their kings. The word means *he will understand* or *wise*. Later, in Judges 4, the Israelites will face another Jabin, king of Canaan, who rules in Hazor at least a century later. We are given no specific details as to what has happened in the interim, but the best explanation was that a large group of people went back into Hazor and rebuilt it and reinstated their historic dynasty (this was perhaps 100–200 years later). Also, there apparently was another city Hazor (and possibly two) located in Judah, far south from this particular Hazor, as this will be one of the border cities given to the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:20–21,23).

There seems to have been some serious disagreements as to the location of Hazor for a long time. The ancient historian Josephus placed it north of the Lake Huleh.⁸ According to Keil and Delitzsch, its location had not yet been discovered, however, they wrote over a century ago. Robinson places it northwest of Lake Huleh, placing it in the ruins on Tell Khuraibeh, which squares with it being placed between Ramah and Kedesh (Joshua 19:36–37). It has been suggested that Hazor is to be found in the ancient ruins of Huzzur or Hazireh, where there are the remains of very old large buildings, but Keil and Delitzsch point out that this would place Hazor in the area given to Asher. Keil and Delitzsch also mention Tell Hazûr or Khirbet Hazûr, agreeing that their location is reasonable, but the ruins there are not very ancient and the populated area there appears to have been a small village rather than a major city (for that period of time).⁹ Obviously, since we have so much information from excavations today, its site is known to us today.

Joshua 11:1 map

Jabin was obviously a pragmatist and he contacted the major cities in the northern area to set up a line of defense. Madon is mentioned only twice in Scripture and is likely located in modern Qarn Hattin, northwest of Tiberias. Most Bible maps do not even record this city on their maps. Shimron (or, Shimon) will later be given over to the tribe of Zebulun and is a part of the district of Bethlehem. ZPEB says that it has been identified with the modern city Tell es-Semuniya, where artifacts from the Middle and Late Bronze period have been found. It is likely identical to Shimron-meron, mentioned in Joshua 12:20). Nelson places Shimron between the Med and the southern tip of the Sea of Chinneroth. It will be given to the tribe of Zebulun. Achshaph is mentioned in several extra-Biblical sources given in ZPEB and has been tentatively identified with the modern Tell Kisan, seven miles southeast of Acco, placing it near the coast of the Mediterranean, across from the Sea of Galilee.¹⁰ This city will be given to the tribe of Asher.¹¹

⁵ Manfred Barthel, *What the Bible Really Says*; ©1982; © by Quill; p. 136.

⁶ Werner Keller, *The Bible as History* (second revised edition), p. 165.

⁷ Werner Keller, *The Bible as History* (second revised edition), p. 165.

⁸ Josephus; *Antiquities*, v. 5, 1.

⁹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 87.

¹⁰ Keil and Delitzsch go into some detail over the possible locations for these cities and this can be found in Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 87.

¹¹ As usual, a majority of this information comes from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill C. Tenney, ed.; Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976, Vol. 1,3,4 and 5.

And unto the kings who [were] from north of in the hill country and from the Arabah, south of Chinnereth, and in the lowland [or, the Shephelah] and in [the] higher regions of Dor from [the] west;

Joshua
11:2

And to the kings who occupied the northern hill country and those from the southern plains below the Sea of Chinnereth and those who occupy the lowlands as well as the higher regions around Dor.

Pretty much all along the coast of the Dead Sea, along the Jordan River and the Sea of Chinnereth there is a long mountain range. From there to the coast of the Mediterranean, it flattens out into a plain. The mountain range in the north refers to the mountain district of Galilee. The Arabah generally refers to the area south of the Sea of Galilee (Chinnereth), including the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea. Although it does not refer to the southernmost area here (which goes as far as the Gulf of Aqaba), it generally includes that area as well. It comes from the root word for *dry*. The Sea of Chinnereth we know as the Sea of Galilee. The *lowland* is often transliterated *Shephelah*, and *this section of the Holy Land is bounded on the north by the Valley of Aijalon, on the west by the Maritime Plain, on the east by the Central Plateau, and reaches to Beersheba on the south. It is characterized by low, rounded chalk hills divided by several broad valleys.*¹²

Jabin contacted several kings in particular—those given in v. 1; however, he sent men throughout the northern kingdom to every city around over a wide area. These events apparently took place concurrently with the previous couple chapters. Joshua moved in on Jericho and Ai and this caused Jabin to start making preparations.

The last line has the feminine plural construct of *nâphâh* (נָפְחָה) [pronounced *naw-FAW*], which occurs four times in the KJV and is given four different translations: *borders, coast, region* (these three times *nâphâh* is combined with the proper noun Dor); and *sieve* (Isa. 30:28). BDB gives it the translation *height, Gesenius, a lofty place, a sieve*. Owen neatly sidesteps this and translates this as a proper noun, *Naphoth-dor*. I will go with *higher regions*. Strong's #5299 BDB #632.

Dor is on the coast of the Med, eight miles north of Cæsarea and seven miles below Mount Carmel. The same area today is called *Tantura, Tortura* or *Dandora*, which is a named somehow derived from *Dor*. The ruins of ancient Dor is a bit more than a mile away from the hamlet named, on a small range of hills. To the north of this are some rocky rangers, out of which grottos and houses have been cut into the rock itself. Dor is possibly derived from the Akkadain word *duru* (transliterated in I Macc. 15 as Δωρᾶ), which means *fortress*. The Phœnicians farmed the shells along the coast to use for their purple dyes. ZPEB writes: *Dor was one of the cities within the borders of Issachar and Asher which were assigned to Manasseh although Manasseh was unable to capture it.*¹³ Later, it is said that descendants of Ephraim possessed it. I don't quite follow how all four tribes have a part in this. Nevertheless, Dor was left with some inhabitants, as we will see in Joshua 17:11. Dor was a royal city and the area surrounding it took on the same name.

Joshua 11:2 map

[to] the Canaanite from east and west; and the Amorite and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the hill country, and the Hivite under Hermon in a land of the Mizpah [or, lookout post].

Joshua
11:3

to the Canaanite from the east and the west; and the Amorite and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the hill country; and the Hivite below Mount Hermon in the land of Mizpah.

Hill country is one word, *har* (הַר) [pronounced *har*], which means *hill, mountain, hill-country*. Strong's #2042 (and #2022) BDB #249.

¹² *The New Scofield Reference Bible*; Dr. C.I. Scofield; ©1967 New York·Oxford University Press; p. 217.

¹³ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill C. Tenney, ed.; Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976, Vol. 2; p. 156. Additional material came from Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 88, who cited several sources for their information.

We have a different preposition thrown into this verse—one that Joshua is particularly fond of—tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced *TAH-khahth*], which means *underneath, below, under beneath*. Strong’s #8478 BDB #1065. Most of us have heard of Mount Hermon. This is the southern spur of mountains which runs parallel to and opposite the Lebanon mountain range, separated by the valley of Beqaa. Mount Hermon itself is 9200 ft. above sea level, although here the simple name *Hermon* probably refers to the mountains in general. This mountain is high enough to be seen from most of the surrounding area of Palestine, owing to the fact that there is snow atop it throughout the year, thus earning the names *grey-haired mountain* and *mountain of the snow*. Mount Hermon is actually north east of the small lake above Lake Chinneroth. This would place it in the area partially conquered by the Israelites prior to crossing over the Jordan. The Hivites could be on either side of the mountain.

Mizpah (or Mizpeh) is the Hebrew *mits^epâh* (מִצְפֶּה) [pronounced *mitz^e-PAW*], and it means *outlook point, watchtower*. Strong’s #4708 (& #4709) BDB #859. ZPEB lists as many as six different *Mizpah*’s, three of them west of the Jordan. This would not be unusual, given the name. One of the important things to a city as a line of defense is knowing ahead of time if they might be under attack. With a watchtower or a lookout point, they can see their enemies approaching. Keil and Delitzsch identified this particular spot with the village of Mutulleh or Mtelleh, which stands upon a hill over 200 feet tall, overlooking the Huleh basin.¹⁴ There were probably many areas and sites known as Mizpah. The end of this verse could be just as easily rendered *land of the lookout post*. With the mountains in the Hermon area, it would be logical to call this *the land of the lookout post*. Barnes gives the location alluded to in this verse as the plain which is at the foot of Mount Hermon, stretching south-westwards. *Mizpah* would be the lookout post itself and the *land of Mizpah* would be the land which the lookout post overlooked. Barnes warns us not to confuse this Mizpah with the Mizpah of Gilead (Joshua 13:26 Judges 11:29); nor with the Mizpah of Judah (Joshua 15:38); nor with the Mizpah of Moab (I Sam. 22:3).

We have covered the people mentioned in this verse back in Joshua 3:10.

And so they came out [even] they and all of their troops with them—a great people as the sand which [is] upon the seashore, with regards to the multitude and horses and chariots—very many.

Joshua
11:4

And so they came out, these kings and all their troops with them, a large number of people as the sand on the seashore, along with a large number of horses and chariots.

The meaning of this is pretty obvious, but I would like to look at what others have done:

- The Emphasized Bible* ...and they came out—they and all their hosts with them, much people like the sand that is upon the seashore for multitude,—with horses and chariots very many.
- NASB And they came out, they and all their armies with them, as many people as the sand that is on the seashore, with very many horses and chariots.
- Owen's Translation ...and they came out with all their troops with them—a great host, as the sand that is upon the seashore; in number and horses and chariots—very many.
- Young's Lit. Translation* ...and they go out, they and all their camps with them, a people numerous, multitude, and horse and charioteer very many

This reads: **And so they came out—they and all of their...** What follows is the masculine plural of *machăneh* (מַחֲנֶה) [pronounced *mah-khuh-NEH*], which means *camp, encampment*. It can refer to the *camp* or to those in the *camp*, who are often *soldiers* or *troops* (Ex. 14:24 Judges 4:16). It can even refer to a moving group or to a group which *camp* together temporarily, without that being the emphasis of the noun (Gen. 33:8 50:9). Strong’s #4264 BDB #334. This is followed by *with them*.

Then we have the masculine singular of *‘am* (אָם) [pronounced *ahm*] and it means *people*. Here we could stretch the meaning somewhat and translate it by the word *multitude*. Strong’s #5971 BDB #766. It is described by an adjective *rah^bv* (רַב) [pronounced *rah^bv*] means *many, much, great* (in the sense of large, not acclaimed). Strong’s #7227 BDB #912. This will be found again at the end of the verse. The comparison between the number

¹⁴ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 88.

of men and the number of grains of sand on the seashore is often found in the Bible (Gen. 22:27 Judges 7:12). There obviously is not an infinite number of grains of sand, but there are more than we would want to count; and that aptly describes the number of soldiers who will oppose Israel from the north. For what it's worth, Josephus estimated this to be around 300,000 enemy troops.

The first coalition against Joshua was mandated by immediate necessity—Joshua was about to attack them—it was only a matter of a few days, so the five-king coalition occurred immediately after Ai and Gibeon. However, in the north, these kings have had longer to examine the situation, to determine what they want or don't want to do. It is obvious that Jabin is a strong and influential leader who is able to use his charisma in order to band these diverse groups of people together. His reach and his influence extended throughout the entire northern portion of Palestine. The kings which he has contacted have come to realize how strong Joshua is, as have the people of the north. They don't have many options. They can flee and take their families, which might result in the safety of some or many; they can surrender, although most of the peoples of the land apparently were aware of the policy of God to kill all of His enemies; or they could band and attack. The latter seems to make the most sense. Although this group of kings and people were independent and diverse, they all had one thing in common: they did not believe in God—they did not wholly fear Him and decided that they were strong enough and numerous enough to defeat Israel and her God. The people of the north knew about Moses and Egypt; they knew about the parting of the Sea of Reeds; they knew about Joshua's defeat of the areas and kings of the south. However, they did not fear God enough to throw themselves at Joshua's mercy, as did the Gibeonites. They reasoned that they had every bit as much experience as the Israelites; and that their equipment was far superior to what Israel had (Israel had spears; the northern peoples had chariots and horses). It was as if all things were almost equal, except that one side had tanks. How could they possibly compare? This was the thinking of the northern kings. They were going to bring a coalition against Israel such as the world had never seen before. This incident is not far from paralleling the battle of Armageddon in the end times. A large number of numerically and technically superior armies will gather in Israel and do battle against Israel and Israel will defeat them, delivered by the hand of the Almighty God.

There are some smaller populations and some groups who elect leaders, or who are led by people whose leadership ability is questionable. It as if no one else wanted the job and that there people who were not in any way qualified, but taken on by default. Jabin was not one of those kind of men. He was charismatic, pragmatic, intelligent and a statesman. He was able to rally a large group of diverse peoples with the messages which he sent out. He was careful to select the right men to make the presentation to the kings of the surrounding areas and he received a full response. I am guessing that he, more than probably anyone else, had a clue as to the strength of the Israelites, because of their relationship to God. I believe that this occurred to him when he weighed his own options as what he should do. However, what came to the forefront of his thinking was rulership over all of northern Palestine. Who better to take such a wide control than him? He will lead all of these groups of people against Israel. So, he has a definite choice to ponder—does he choose to fear God or does he choose to oppose God, hoping that if he opposes God and destroys Israel, that he can look forward to great political power and approbation of the people of the land. A real option for him to ponder is that, as a result of this advancing enemy Israel, he could become one of the most famous and powerful people of his day. His choice, which was the culmination of thousands of choices made day after day, was a choice of negative volition toward God in hopes of gaining power, approbation, and (most likely) great wealth.

We then have the lamed prefixed preposition, the definite article, and the masculine singular substantive $rô^b v$ (רוב) [pronounced *roh^bv*], which means *multitude, abundance, greatness*. Strong's #7230 BDB #913. Notice how close this word is in form to the previous adjective—they are cognates of one another. Insofar as we know, Joshua has not faced chariots and horses before as an integral part of the enemy's infantry. Although it is not stated directly in Joshua, Israel generally enjoyed a great numeric superiority. Although his men were not professional soldiers, they had had recent experience on the other side of the Jordan. They also appeared to be highly organized. Joshua could issue orders and within hours, the entire army could be mobilized. Their enemies were physically larger, which would generally weigh heavily in hand to hand combat, which appears to be a great deal of the conflict. This time, their enemy was not overwhelmed with Israel's numerical superiority. The north had soldiers, the number of which was like the sand on the seashore. And, in the north, they apparently had quite an extensive cavalry, giving them great speed and mobility. However, what they lacked in their war was God. I recall folk

singers of my generation deride the idea of God on someone's side during a war, but the Bible makes it abundantly clear that is the deciding factor in any war.

And so they assembled [themselves] all the kings the these and so they came and so they encamped together at the waters of Merom to fight with Israel.

Joshua
11:5

So all the these kings assembled together and came and camped at the waters of Merom to do battle with Israel.

The first verb is the 3rd person masculine plural, Niphal imperfect of *yâ'ad* (אָדָּה) [pronounced *yaw-GAHD*], which means, in the Niphal, *to make an appointment, to meet, to meet together, to assemble*. Strong's #3259 BDB #416.

Barnes tells us that the waters of Merom means *upper waters*. I could not verify that with BDB, where similar words mean *rebellion, smooth, to scour or polish or bitter*. *Merom* is obviously a transliteration of *mêrôm* (מְרוֹם) [pronounced *may-ROHM*], and BDB also identifies it with Lake Huleh. Strong's #4792 BDB #598.

ZPEB places these waters midway between the Sea of Chinneroth and the Dead Sea, somewhat closer to the Jordan than to the Mediterranean. There is a great deal of dissent here. One scholar places this up off the shore of Lake Huleh, identifying the two (Lake Huleh and the waters of Merom) as one. Barnes describes nearby Lake Huleh: *This lake occupies the southern half of the Ard el Huleh, a depressed basin some fifteen miles long and three or four broad lying between the hills of Galilee on the west and the lower spurs of Heron on the east. The size of the lake varies with the reason, and the northern side of it ends in a large swamp. The shape of the lake is triangular, the point being at the south, where the Jordan, which enters it on the north, against quits it. There is a considerable space of table-land along the souther-western shore, and here probably the troops of Jabin and his confederates where encamped, preparing to move southwards when Joshua and his army fell suddenly upon them.*¹⁵ The NIV Study Bible identifies this with modern Meirun, eight miles northwest of the Sea of Galilee. Keil and Delitzsch concur with the NIV (calling the village *Meirôm*), *a celebrated pilgrimage among the Jews, because Hillel, Shammai, Simeon ben Jochain, and other noted Rabbins are said to be buried there...[it is] about two hours' journey north-west of Szafed, upon a rocky mountain, at the foot of which there is a spring that forms a small brook and flows away through the valley below Szafed... This stream, which is said to reach the Lake of Tiberias, in the neighbourhood of Bethsaida, is in all probability to be regarded as the "waters of Merom," as, according to Josephus (Ant. v. 1, 18), "these kings encamped at Berothe...a city of Upper Galilee, not far from Kedese."*¹⁶ Most of the article in ZPEB deals with the location of the waters of Merom and the various differences of opinions and their evidences offered.¹⁷

[Return to Outline](#)

Joshua Defeats the Northern King Coalition

And Y^ehowah said unto Joshua, "Do not be afraid out from their faces for tomorrow about the time the this, I will give over all of them fatal woundings before faces of Israel; their horses, you will hamstring and their chariots, you will burn in the fire.

Joshua
11:6

So Jehovah said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid in their presence because tomorrow, at about this same time, I will deliver them all over, slain, in the presence of Israel. You will hamstring their horses and you will burn their chariots with fire.

¹⁵ *Barnes' Notes*, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 379.

¹⁶ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 88. Keil and Delitzsch go into detail why the ancient waters of Merom are not to be identified with Lake Huleh on the same page.

¹⁷ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill C. Tenney, ed.; Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976, Vol. 4; pp. 192–193.

The way that God would deliver these men over to Israel is described by the masculine plural noun *châlâl* (חָלַל) [pronounced *chaw-LAWL*], which means *slain, fatally wounded, wounded, pierced*. BDB lists this as a noun, as does Owen; Gesenius and New Englishman's Concordance as an adjective. It describes the result of someone who has been pierced. Strong's #2491 BDB #319.

God continually reassured Joshua: **And so Jehovah said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands; not one of them will stand before you."** (Joshua 10:8).¹⁸

*Zodhiates: Cutting the tendons of the legs rendered the horses unfit for military service. This is illustrated in the word translated "hamstrung." Israel herself was forbidden by God to develop a cavalry (Deut. 17:16) because God wanted them to depend upon Him, not the strength of horses (Isa. 31:1, 3).*¹⁹ To remind you of the reference to Deut. 17:16: "Furthermore, he [the king] will not multiply horses for himself, nor will he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since Jehovah has said to you, 'You will never again return that way.'" Isa. 31:1–3: **Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek Jehovah! Yet He also is wise and will bring disaster, and He does not retract His words, but He will arise against the house of evildoers and against the help of the workers of iniquity. Now the Egyptians are men and they are not God; and their horses are flesh and not spirit. So Jehovah will stretch out His hand and he who helps will stumble and he who is helped will fall and all of them will come to an end together.** Barnes: *This sinew [or, tendon] once severed cannot be healed, and the horses would thus be irreparably lamed. This was the first appearance of horses in the wars with the Canaanites.*²⁰ However, I need to add to that when David captured a key city in his fight against the Philistines, he hamstrung their horses, but not all of them. He kept enough for the 100 chariots that he also got in that battle (II Sam. 8:4). We have a written record of the actual use of chariots and horses by the Jews only as early as King Solomon (I Kings 9:22 10:26–29).

And so Joshua came and all his people of the war with him upon them by the waters of Merom suddenly and then fell upon them.

Joshua
11:7

And so Joshua came along with his people and surprise attacked them at the waters of Merom.

The final verb in this verse is the Qal imperfect of *nâphal* (נָפַל) [pronounced *naw-FAHL*], which means *to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply*. Strong's #5307 BDB #656. Apparently the large coalition had met and were moving south. It was rather difficult to move this large of any army due to having so many different generals involved; therefore their movement was slow. It is unclear whether Joshua knew of their presence or coalition. However, it had been his custom to send out spies to get the lay of the land, to determine the strength and weaknesses of an area, and to help set strategy. A situation like this saves Joshua a great deal of trouble. The primary forces which will act against him are all right here. The implication of this verse is that Joshua knew that they were all there and he fell upon them suddenly—that is, he was the one with the advantage of surprise.

*McGee: Joshua's strategy, after dividing the land in two, was to come upon the enemy suddenly. You will see that Alexander the Great and also Napoleon used these same tactics.*²¹ Barnes: *As before, at Gibeon (x. 9), so now Joshua anticipates his enemies. Taken by surprise, and hemmed in between the mountains and the lake, the chariots and horses would have no time to deploy and no room to act effectively; and thus, in all probability, the unwieldy host of the Canaanites fell at once into hopeless confusion.*²² Israel's sudden attack and the tight quarters made the chariots and horses more of a liability to the Canaanites. There apparently were routes of escape, and the Israelites were able to follow them and cut them down.

¹⁸ Barnes, Scofield, NKJV and NASB all cited the same references. Tiny thrill.

¹⁹ *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 601.

²⁰ *Barnes' Notes*, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 379.

²¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 70.

²² *Barnes' Notes*, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 379.

And so Y^ehowah gave them in a hand of Israel and so they struck them and so they chased them as far as Great Sidon and as far as Misrephoth-maim and as far as the valley of Mizpeh eastward. And so they struck them until a remnant did not remain.

Joshua
11:8

So Jehovah delivered them into the hand of Israel. Therefore, they struck them and chased them as far northwest as Great Sidon, as far north as Misrephoth-maim, and as far east as Mizpeh. They continued their attack until there were no survivors.

It is a difficult determination from this verse alone as to whether the Israelites had these opposing armies in such a trap that they could only retreat in one direction. It would make more sense that they had limited escape movement to begin with, but that, as some of them continued to retreat, that there became more options for direction to move in. From the waters of Merom, they were able to proceed either north-northeast or north-northwest.

Joshua 11:8 map

The only Sidon which I am aware of is on the western coast, even above Lake Huleh, in Phoenicia, a little north of Tyre. Barnes suggests that it could be Sidon-rabbah, which is a transliteration of *the great Sidon*. Sidon was a metropolis of various subject towns and territories,²³ which general area will be given to the tribe of Asher. It had not be conquered, however (Judges 1:31). This city is mentioned in ancient Egyptian papyri as well as by Homer and was, at one time, the capital of Phœnicia. *In later times, it was eclipsed by Tyre.*²⁴ In the Old Testament, as well as the New, Tyre and Sidon are continually mentioned together (Isa. 23:2, 4, 12 Jer. 27:3 47:4 Matt. 11:22 15:21). Since we will encounter this city several times in the future, we will go into more detail at that time.

ZPEB suggests that Misrephoth-maim means *lime burning at the water*; Rotherham suggests *salt works* or *glass-smelting works*; Barnes suggests *salt pits* or *burnings*. ZPEB suggests that it is located near Tyre, but that is based only upon this verse, which is not necessarily the case. Barnes writes that it might be identical with Zarephath, which was one of the towns belonging to Sidon (I Kings 17:9), making it the Sarepta of the New Testament. The name could refer to *hot springs* as well as to a place of smelting located near waters. Joshua is giving the furthestmost points that the opposing armies scattered in. At some point in time, they would retreat toward areas which they knew, which would indicate that some would go north, others northwest and others northeast. My thinking is that this would be more than likely a northernmost point, rather than an area close to Sidon. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* suggests that Misrephoth-maim is on the coast, south of Sidon, but back peddled and suggest that this location is fine for now until a better suggestion comes along. Joshua 13:6 indicates that one might find Mishrephoth at the northern portion of Lebannon. However, they are associated there again with the Sidonians, making a coastal location possible.

Mizpeh here is spelled differently than in v. 3; however, the difference is a vowel, and they were added long after the fact. Therefore, the difference is likely to be insignificant. It would be reasonable to determine that this is the same Mizpah as v. 3, near Mount Hermon, which would be to the northeast.

When it reads that Israel struck them until a remnant did not remain, that meant in the areas completely conquered by Israel. We already know that there are a half dozen cities at least where there still exists a significant population of those hostile to Israel. These are left there by God to test Israel over the next few centuries. In fact, some of these areas will be occupied until the time of David and Solomon. Thieme, who is an expert in ancient history, claims that some of these people escaped all the way to Africa and became the Carthaginians.

And so Joshua did to them as which Y^ehowah said to him: their horses he hamstrung and their chariots he turned in the fire.

Joshua
11:9

So Joshua did exactly as instructed by Jehovah: he hamstrung their horses and he burned their chariots with fire.

²³ Barnes' Notes, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 379.

²⁴ This quote, as well as most of this information, came from Barnes' Notes, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 379..

It is interesting that God did not have Joshua keep their horses and their chariots to use in war. However, as God has required through much of this, the Israelites were kept separate from that which was closely associated with the peoples of the land. Matthews incorrectly asserts that the Israelites hamstringed the horses and burned the chariots because they would not be skilled enough to repair them, nor would these things help them as invading troops out of the hill country.²⁵ However, the Israelites did not do this because they rejected progress; they did it because God had so ordered them to (v. 6). God expected the Israelites to depend upon Him and not upon chariots or horses.

Return to Outline

Joshua Conquers Northern Palestine

And so Joshua turned back in the time the this and so he took Hazor and her king, he struck in the sword; because Hazor formerly, she a head of all of the kingdoms the these.

Joshua
11:10

And then Joshua turned back at this time and he took Hazor and her king, he struck with the sword, because Hazor was formerly the head of all these kingdoms.

Like before, the meaning is fairly easy to ascertain; I am just looking to catch a few details in the translation:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Then Joshua turned back at that time and captured Hazor and the king thereof smote he with the sword,—for Hazor aforetime was the head of [alternate reading: was head to] all these kingdoms.
NASB	Then Joshua turned back at that time, and captured Hazor and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor formerly was the head of all these kingdoms.
NIV	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).
Owen's Translation	and Joshua turned back at that time and took Hazor and its king he smote with the sword for Hazor formerly it was the head of all those kingdoms.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And Joshua turneth back at that time, and captureth Hazor, and its king he hath smitten by the sword; for Hazor formerly is head of all these kingdoms.

We first have the Qal imperfect of the verb for *turn back, to return*. The most likely use of this verb means that Joshua and his men first passed Hazor to get to the coalition of the northern kings; and that he then returned, or went back the way he came, back to Hazor and attacked it. In any case, they advanced on the enemy, followed them in several directions and killed them. Then they returned to Hazor to burn it and destroy the population therein. After the verb *return*, we have the *bêyth* preposition, the definite article and the feminine substantive *êth* (אֵת) [pronounced *gayth*], and it means *time, the right time, the proper time*. Strong's #6256 BDB #773. This is further modified by that demonstrative adjective, giving this a more temporal, logical flow. That is, this indicates that Joshua's attack upon Hazor was next.

After the word Hazor, we have the lamed preposition and the masculine plural of *pânîym* (פָּנִים) [pronounced *paw-NEEM*], which means *faces*. With the *lâmed* preposition, it means *in the sight of, in the presence of, in your face, before the face of or, more literally, to or for the faces*. However, we do have an adverbial temporal use of this noun, which is what we find here (and in Deut. 2:12, 20 Judges 1:10, 11, 13); in this case it means *formerly*. Strong's #6440 BDB #815. What this would imply is that Hazor was a more powerful city in the past. What some authors have suggested is that Egypt, under Pharaoh Sethos I, attacked and plundered Hazor circa 1300 B.C., and that Joshua finished the job in this chapter. This causes some problems with our time table, as Joshua is likely conquering these lands in the late 1300's. However, what is definitely implied is that Joshua was not attacking Hazor in its heyday.

²⁵ *Manners and Customs in the Bible*; Victor H. Matthews; ©1991; Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 62.

In thinking this over, the meaning is somewhat more obscure. Assuming that Joshua did this immediately after his attack upon and the defeat of northern the coalition, then we have the problem of Hazor's king. Did that king escape and survive? What is most likely is that v. 8 is a summary verse; particularly with the reference to not leaving a survivor. What we have in the following verses is a mopping up operation where Joshua goes through the northern kingdom and continues to act of leaving not a survivor. Although it is possible that Joshua had killed the king in the original battle, it is more likely that he was killed when Joshua attacked Hazor. What I am saying is that exact chronological sequence is not clear.

The reasons that Joshua then attacked Hazor are varied: (1) it is the soundest thing to do psychologically speaking. All indications are the Hazor is the largest and the dominant kingdom of the northern area (in fact, in all of Palestine). If Joshua takes it, then great psychological relief is provided for his own men, and great fear will fall upon those who are his enemies throughout the northern kingdom. (2) Hazor may be the nearest major city. (3) There was apparently some who escaped to Hazor and Joshua and his men pursued them there to finish their defeat.

The defeat of the armies at the waters of Merom was a much greater victory, but Joshua was required to attack and destroy the cities from whence these armies originated. They came out of negative volition and those who remained in the cities would be no more positive volition therein. It is likely that some soldiers remained in the city and that some escaped the devastation of Merom and returned to the city. The archeological site of Hazor has revealed that Hazor had been burned circa 1400 B.C., circa 1300 B.C. and circa 1230 B.C. The NIV Study Bible identifies the destruction of 1300 B.C. with Pharaoh Seti I of Egypt, giving us either the late or the early date for the destruction of city by Joshua. Although I have not done extensive studies on the timing, my educated guess would be for the earlier date.

And so they struck all the soul who [were] in her to a mouth of a sword completely destroying [them]. All breathing did not remain and Hazor he burned in the fire. Joshua 11:11

So they struck every soul in Hazor by the mouth of the sword, completely destroying them. There was not left remaining a breathing person; and Hazor, he burned with fire.

Again, we should look at other translations here to clear over some rough spots:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, devoting them to destruction, there was left no breathing thing,—and Hazor burned he up with fire.
NASB	And they struck every person who was in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying <i>them</i> ; there was no one left who breathed. And he burned Hazor with fire.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...and they smite every person who <i>is</i> in it by the mouth of the sword; he hath devoted—he hath not left any one breathing, and Hazor he hath burned with fire.

A mouth of a sword is preceded by the lamed preposition, which can denote the mark of a dative, and it can be rendered by. No Strong's # BDB #510. The NASB translators and myself came up with the same problem. After pretty much a complete sentence we have the Hiphil infinitive absolute of *châram* (חָרַם) [pronounced *khaw-RAM*], which means *completely devoted to, devoted to, or completely destroyed*. Strong's #2763 BDB #355 (& #356). The Hiphil infinitive absolute presents a verb in the active voice with causative action, used as a verbal noun, generally used as a complement of affirmation. The infinitive absolute is a verbal noun which can serve as a noun, a verb or an adverb. Therefore, we can render this, *completely destroying [them]* or *a complete and total destruction [or, devotion]*.

The next verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Niphal perfect of *yâthar* (יָתַר) [pronounced *yaw-THAHR*], which means *to remain over, to remain*. Strong's #3498 BDB #451. What did not remain is given next as the masculine singular construct of *kôl* (כֹּל) [pronounced *kole*], which means *the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every*. Strong's #3605 BDB #481. This is followed by the feminine singular noun *n'eshâmâh* (נֶשְׂמָה) [pronounced *nesh-MAH*].

[pronounced *n^oshaw-MAW*], which means *breath*; with *kôl*, it means *every breathing thing*. Strong's #5397 BDB #675. This causes me some confusion. Is this the subject? That is, does the verb have to agree with *breathing thing* or with *all*? As has been mentioned many times—it was the command of God to destroy entirely the inhabitants of these cities (Deut. 7:22 20:16 Joshua 10:40).²⁶ That Moses made this command will be noted in the next verse; that God so commanded Moses will be noted in vv. 15 and 20.

And all cities of the kings the those and all their kings captured Joshua and then he struck them to a mouth of a sword—he utterly destroyed them as which commanded Moses, a servant of Y^ehowah.

Joshua
11:12

So Joshua seized all the cities of those kings and all their kings. He then struck them with the mouth of a sword, completely destroying them as Moses, a servant of Jehovah, had commanded him.

The word for *king* here is the masculine plural of *melek^e* (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced *MEH-lek*], which means *king, prince*. Strong's #4428 BDB #572. We think of much larger empires when we think of a king, but what we have here are not much different than military mayors. What has me somewhat confused is the phrase *and all their kings*. That latter phrase has the *wâw* conjunction, the sign of the direct object, and the phrase *all their kings*. *Their* is in the masculine plural, so we are not referring back to *cities*, which is in the feminine plural. The only reasonable thing for is to refer to is *those kings*. I'm thinking that either Owen made a mistake here, or there is a mistake in the verse. It would make sense for Joshua to seize the cities of those kings and to seize the kings of those cities as well. I don't see those kings as having *kings* over them. Rotherham renders this as *and all the kings thereof*; the NASB, Young and Owen: *and all their kings*; KJV: *and all the kings of them*.

The verb is the Qal perfect of *lâkad* (לָקַח) [pronounced *law-KAHD*], which means *to capture, to seize, to take*; quite the popular verb with Joshua. Strong's #3920 BDB #539. Moses received this command from God: **Then Joshua spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan Jericho, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you cross over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then you will drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and you will destroy all their figured stones, and you will destroy all their molten images and you will demolish all their high places; and you will take possession of the land and you will live in it, for I have given the land to you to possess it. And you will inherit the land by lot according to your families, to the larger, you will give more inheritance, and to the smaller, you will give less inheritance. Wherever the lot falls to anyone, that shall be his. You will inherit according to the tribes of your fathers. But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it will come to pass that those whom you allow to remain will be as twigs in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they will trouble you in the land in which you live.'**" (Num. 33:50–55).

But all of the cities the standing ones upon their mounds, Israel did not burn them except Hazor by herself alone burned Joshua.

Joshua
11:13

But of all the cities which were standing upon mounds, Israel did not burn them, with the exception of Hazor, which Joshua burned.

What we find here helps to clarify the masculine plural suffix of the previous verse. *Their* in *their mounds*; and *them* are both masculine plural suffixes here. *Cities*, a feminine plural, must be referred back to with masculine suffixes for some reason. *The standing ones* is the definite article and the Qal active participle, feminine plural of *ʿâmad* (עָמַד) [pronounced *ǰaw-MAHD*], which means *to take a stand, to stand, to remain, to endure*, also one of Joshua's favorite verbs. Strong's #5975 BDB #763. As a participle, it acts as a verbal noun. *Mound* is the masculine singular of *têl* (תֵּל) [pronounced *tale*], which means *mound, ruins, heap*; it can mean the *mound* or *hill* where a city stood. Although we have seen this word quite a number of times as attached to the names of present mountains and sites, it is only found twice in Joshua, once in Deuteronomy and twice in Jeremiah. The corresponding Arabic word is *tell*. The use of this word would imply that Hazor had been burned to the ground before, which puts us at a later date (assuming that the archeologists are accurate about their dates). Given where Hazor probably is, it would seem more likely that Egypt would have conquered and burn Hazor to the ground prior to the attack of Israel and that Hazor had been rebuilt by the time that Israel invaded the land.

²⁶ One might say that it was the command of Moses in the first two passages to destroy all that lives; the second passage indicates that this is in accordance with God's will.

However, Joshua does not actually use the word *têl* with Hazor, but with the surrounding cities, the ones which he allowed to remain standing. Furthermore, one could argue that because of the destruction of these cities built upon hills and because another city was built upon the ruins of the former city, that *têl* came to mean *ruins, heap*, where it first began to simply mean *mound*. Strong's #8510 BDB #1068.

We have two particles of exception. Prior to Hazor, we have the conjunction *zûlâh* (זֹלָה) [pronounced *zoo-LAH*], which means *except, besides, only, save that*. Strong's #2108 BDB #265. After *Hazor*, we have the lamed preposition and the masculine singular noun *bad* (בַּד) [pronounced *bahd*], which refers to *separation, by itself, alone*. Most translators ignore the lamed preposition, as it is difficult to translate into something which makes sense in the English (see Num. 11:14 Deut. 1:9 8:3 II Sam. 10:8). Since this had the feminine suffix (referring back to the city of Hazor), I rendered this as *by herself alone*. Strong's #905 BDB #94.

And all spoil of the cities the these and the cattle they pillaged for themselves, sons of Israel; only all of the man they struck down by a mouth of a sword until he [the mouth of the sword] annihilated them. They did not let remain every breathing thing.

Joshua
11:14

And the sons of Israel pillaged all the spoil of these cities as well as the cattle; however, every man they struck down with the edge of the sword until they were destroyed. They did not spare anyone who breathed.

The first verb is the 3rd person plural, Qal perfect of *bâzaz* (בָּזַז) [pronounced *baw-ZAHZ*], which means *to spoil, to plunder, to pillage, to despoil, to depredate, to freeboot, to ransack*. Strong's #962 BDB #102. The verb is followed by the lamed preposition and a 3rd person masculine plural suffix. *Sons of Israel* is the subject. The word for *spoil* is the masculine singular construct of *shâlal* (שָׁלַל) [pronounced *shaw-LAWL*], which means *booty, spoil, plunder*; we might render it as *recompense* or their *reward* for believing God and carrying out His plan. Strong's #7998 BDB #1021. I was really expecting these words to be cognates of one another, but obviously, they are not.

The next phrase begins with the adverb *raq* (רַק) [pronounced *rahk*] means *only, provided, altogether, surely*—it carries with it restrictive force. It adds a limitation to something previously expressed, in which case it is rendered *only*. Let me show you how others have rendered *raq*: *but* (KJV, NKJV, Owen, *The Amplified Bible*); *only* (Young) *nevertheless* (Rotherham). Strong's #7534 & #7535 BDB #956. The restrictive force is that they did not take the men with them as booty or spoil (i.e., as slaves). What follows is, literally, *all of the man they struck by a mouth of a sword until*.

Then we have 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect, 3rd person masculine plural suffix of the verb *shâmad* (שָׁמַד) [pronounced *shaw-MAHD*] means *to annihilate, to exterminate* in the Hiphil. This word is found only in the Niphal or the Hiphil, so a causal relationship may or may not exist. Strong's #8045 BDB #1029.

We then have the negative and the 3rd person plural, Hiphil perfect of *shâ`ar* (שָׂאָר) [pronounced *shaw-AHR*] and it means *to let remain, to leave over, to leave behind*. These are Hiphil meanings and this verb is found onl in the Niphal and the Hiphil. Strong's #7604 BDB #983. What they did not allow to survive was the construct of *kôl* (*all of, every*), and the feminine singular of *n^eshâmâh* (נִשְׂמָה) [pronounced *n^eshaw-MAW*], which means *breath*; with *kôl*, it means *every breathing thing*. Strong's #5397 BDB #675. In this case, it obviously is applied only to human beings, as they took the cattle for spoil. This was as per the command of Moses: **“When Jehovah your God gives a city into your hand, you will strike all of the men in it with the edge of the sword. Only the women and the children and the animals and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you will take as booty for yourself; and you will use the spoil of your enemies which Jehovah your God has given you.”** (Deut. 20:13–14).²⁷

²⁷ Although the context of this passage is for the cities outside the land, this portion applies to the cities within Palestine.

As which commanded Y^ehowah Moses, His servant, so commanded Moses Joshua; and so did Joshua. He did not remove a word from all of which commanded Y^ehowah Moses.

Joshua
11:15

Just as Jehovah commanded Moses, His servant, so Moses commanded Joshua; and so Joshua did. He did not remove a word from all the Jehovah commanded Moses.

Three times we have the 3rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect of the verb tsâwâh (הָצַו) [pronounced tsaw-WAW], which means *to commission, to mandate, to command, to order*. This is a verb found only in the Piel. Strong's #6680 BDB #845. God first commanded Moses. Although we have seen several examples, here is one: Then God said, "Observe, I am going to make a covenant. Before all of your people I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of Jehovah, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you. Be certain to observe what I am commanding you this day: Observe, I am going to drive out the Amorite before you, and the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, so that it does not become a snare in your midst." (Ex. 34:10–12). Moses commanded Joshua, both by the Word, which he recorded and which Joshua studied, and directly. Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you will go with this people into the land which Jehovah has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you will give it to them as an inheritance. And Jehovah is the one who goes ahead of you. He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear, nor be dismayed." (Deut. 31:7–8). God also commanded Joshua directly: "Only be strong and courageous; be careful to do according to all of the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law will not depart from your mouth, but you will study it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; fo rthen you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success." (Joshua 1:7–8). Joshua then performed what he had been commanded.

The second to the last verb is the Hiphil perfect of çûwr (סִוַּר) [pronounced soor], which generally means *to turn aside*, however, in the Hiphil, it means *to cause to depart, to remove, to take away*. Strong's #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693. This is followed by *a word*. The NKJV suggests, in the margin, that the literal rendering is: *he turned aside from nothing*. The NASB and the KJV render this: *he left nothing undone*. Barnes suggests in his margin that this is literally: *he removed nothing*. What we have is the negative approach—the flip side of *he did not remove a word from all the Jehovah commanded Moses* is *he obeyed all that Jehovah commanded Moses*. When it comes to obedience, Moses and Joshua and Caleb are pretty much unimpeachable. Joshua will only begin to capture the land which God had promised to Israel. After that, it will be up to those remaining in Israel to take what God had given them and to obey what God had commanded them. Joshua is not to blame for what will follow in the book of Judges.

[Return to Outline](#)

A Retrospective of the Conquest of all Israel

And so took Joshua all the land the this, the hill country, and all the Negev and all land of the Goshen and the Shephelah and the Arabah and hill country of Israel and his lowlands.

Joshua
11:16

So, Joshua took all of this land: the hill country, and all of the Negev and all the land of the Goshen and the lowland and the Arabah and the hill country of Israel and its lowlands.

Probably the best way to deal with this is a map with these areas listed. To remind you, the Negev is the area between Debir and the Arabian desert. Since it is so far south of Israel, it became synonymous with the term *south*. Recall that the Israelites conquered the land of Goshen in the previous chapter, placing it in southern Palestine. The *Shephelah* is often rendered *valley, plain* or *lowland*. *It is bounded on the north by the Valley of Aijalon, on the west by the Maritime Plain, on the east by the Central Plateau, and on the south by Beersheba.*

It is characterized by low, rounded chalk hills divided by several broad valleys.²⁸ The Arabah is generally translated *plain*; with the definite article, it refers to the valley which runs from the Sea of Chinnereth (the Sea of Galilee) down to the Gulf of Aqaba. Strong's #6160 BDB #787. We do have the interesting phrase *hill country of Israel*. *Israel* in the Hebrew is *yis'ra'êl* (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced *yis-raw-ALE*], and it is obviously transliterated *Israel*. Strong's #3478 BDB #975. I believe that this chapter is the first mention of Israel in connection with the land—as in, the land of Israel. Up until now, it has belonged to the Canaanites and the Amalekites—now it officially belongs to Israel. The first mention of Israel in secular history is found on the “Israel Stele” [pronounced *STEE-lee*]. A monument—a stone slab—was discovered in 1896 in Thebes, in southern Egypt near the Red Sea. This monument stood in a temple as an honor to Pharaoh Merenptah, who was a son of Pharaoh Ramesses II, and ruled between 1213–1223 B.C. He was not a great builder, as his father was, nor a great soldier. Under him, Egypt had enjoyed several years of peace. In the 5th year of his reign, Merenptah defeated the Libyans who threatened him from the west and the inscription on Israel Stele celebrates that victory: *Canaan has been plundered in every evil way, Askelon has been brought away captive, Gezer has been seized, Yenoam has been destroyed. Israel is devastated, having no seed, Syria is widowed because of Egypt. All lands, they are united in peace, everyone who roamed, he has subdued him, by the king of Egypt...Merenptah*. We do not find another mention of Israel in secular artifacts until the famous Moabite stone, which was written almost 400 years later. Given that Merenptah's reign was only ten years and that he was not known as a military genius, that he went to battle against Israel and defeated Israel is debatable. This may represent an actual battle and it might just be bragging. What this Stele does for us is it places Israel, as a people, in the land of Canaan, by at least 1218 B.C.

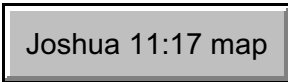
We will get another description of the land in the first half of Joshua 12 and a description of the southern conquests in Joshua 10:40–41.

We know that this verse indicates that we are looking over the entire conquest of Israel, as the areas mentioned here have already been mentioned in Joshua 10:40–41: **Thus Joshua struck all the land, the hill country and the Negev and the Shephelah and the slopes and all their kings. He left no survivor, but he completely destroyed all who breathed, just as Jehovah, the God of Israel, had commanded. And Joshua struck them from Kadesh-barnea even as far as Gaza and all the country of Goshen even as far as Gibeon.**

From the mountain of the Halak the rising [or, ascent] [of] Seir and as far as Baal-gad in a valley of Lebanon below a mountain of Hermon and all of their kings he took and then he struck them and then he executed them.

Joshua
11:17

From Mount Halak, the rising of Seir; and as far as Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon, and all of their kings—he took and he struck them down and he executed them.



Some might look on these names as proper nouns or as descriptions, so let me give you how these are given in other translations (both vv. 16–17):

- The Emphasized Bible** So Joshua took all this land—the hill country and all the south and all the land of Goshen and the lowland and the waste plain,—and the hill country of Israel and the lowland thereof; from Mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even as far as Baal-gad, in the valley of the Lebanon, under Mount Hermon,—and all their kings he captured, and smote them and put them to death.
- NJB** In consequence, Joshua captured this entire country; the highlands, the whole Negeb and the whole of Goshen, the lowlands, the Arabah, the highlands and lowlands of Israel. From Mount Halak, which rises towards Seir, to Baal-Gad in the Vale of Lebanon at the foot of Mount Hermon, he captured all their kings, struck them down and put them to death.
- REB** Thus Joshua took the whole land, the hill-country, all the Negeb, all the land of Goshen, the Shephelah, the Arabah, and the Israelite hill-country with the adjoining

²⁸ *The New Scofield Reference Bible*; Dr. C.I. Scofield; ©1967 New York-Oxford University Press; p. 217.

lowlands. His conquests extended from the bare mountain which leads up to Seir as far as Baal-gad in the vale of Lebanon under Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings, struck them down, and put them to death.

Again, the only way to examine this properly is with a map. However, what we are speaking of here is both the northern and the southern portions of Canaan. Mount Halak is, literally, *mountain of smoothness* or *baldness*. This mountain is a desert peak east of Kadesh Barnea which forms the southern boundary of the land conquered by Joshua and ZPEB identifies it with Jebel Halaq on the northwest side of the Wadi Marra, west of the Ascent of Akkrabbim.²⁹ It is only mentioned here and in Joshua 12:7. Keil and Delitzsch write: *The “bald mountain” (Halak)...is hardly the row of white cliffs which stretches obliquely across the Arabah eight miles below the Dead Sea and formed the dividing line that separates this valley into el-Ghor and el-Araba..., or the present Madara, a strange-looking chalk-hill to the south-west of the pass of Sufah...a steep bare mountain in a barren plain, the sides of which consist of stone and earth of leaden ashy hue...but in all probability the northern edge of the Azazimeh mountain with its white and glistening masses of chalk.*³⁰ ZPEB places Baal-gad at the northern tip of Joshua’s conquests, somewhere between Mount Lebanon and Mount Hermon. Barnes associates Baal-gad with Paneas, later called Cæsarea Philippi. Literally, it means *troop* or *city of Baal*. It was a city where Baal was worshipped and is possibly equivalent to Baal-Hermon (Judges 3:3 | Chron. 5:23). Baal-gad is also mentioned in Joshua 12:7 | 13:5.

Days many made Joshua [with] all of the kings the those war. Joshua 11:18 **Joshua made war with all those kings for a long time.**

What Joshua made was the feminine singular *mil^ochâmâh* (מִלְחָמָה) [pronounced *mil-khaw-MAW*], which means *battle, war*. Strong’s #4421 BDB #536. Although Thieme specified that this refers to northern kings, the area just described in the previous two verses covers the northern and southern portions of Palestine. Chapter 12 will also deal with northern and southern kings both. Therefore, it would make more sense for this reference to cover all of Israel. Going into this war, Joshua was old, although not worn down. My guess is that these wars took approximately seven years in total, with the southern campaign being much shorter than the northern campaign. Caleb was forty years old when he went with Joshua to spy out the land originally (Joshua 14:7). At that point, because of the failure of Israel to take the land, they spent forty years in the desert (actually, 38 following the time spent at Mount Sinai and going to the edge of the land—Deut. 2:14). At the end of the conquest of Palestine, Joshua was 85 (Joshua 14:10), making the time of conquest 5–7 years. Barnes: *This and the preceding chapter contain a very condensed account of the wars of Joshua, giving particulars about leading events only.*³¹

When reading over this verse, it never occurred to me that some critics have called it into question, saying that it contradicts Joshua 10:42, which reads: **And Joshua captured all these kings and their lands at one time, because Jehovah, the God of Israel, fought for Israel.** As those of you who have been reading this know, Joshua 10 dealt with the kings of the south, and that campaign seemed to be relatively short. This verse, combined with the previous two, takes Joshua’s southern and northern campaigns in their entirety, and notes that altogether, the time to conquer Canaan was a long time—5 to 7 years.

There was not a city that made peace unto sons of Israel; except the Hivites inhabiting Gibeon. The all they took in the battle. Joshua 11:19 **None of the cities made peace with the sons of Israel except for the Hivites who lived in Gibeon. The Israelites took all the inhabitants in battle.**

²⁹ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 16, *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 304; and *The New Bible Dictionary*; editor J. D. Douglas; ©Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1962; ©by W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; p.500.

³⁰ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 90; they cite several references in this passage as well.

³¹ *Barnes’ Notes*, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 380.

Because so many cities and peoples warred against the Israelites, we forget what God originally told the people through Moses: **“When you draw near to a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace to it.** It shall be, if it make you answer of peace, and open to you, then it shall be, that all the people who are found therein shall become tributary to you, and shall serve you. If it will make no peace with you, but will make war against you, then you shall besiege it: and when Yahweh your God delivers it into your hand, you shall strike every male of it with the edge of the sword: but the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil of it, shall you take for a prey to yourself; and you shall eat the spoil of your enemies, which Yahweh your God has given you. Thus shall you do to all the cities which are very far off from you, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these peoples, that Yahweh your God gives you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes; but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite; as Yahweh your God has commanded you; that they not teach you to do after all their abominations, which they have done to their gods; so would you sin against Yahweh your God.” (Deut. 20:10–18). It just so happened that the Hivites were the only population to forge a peace with Israel.³²

As we will find out later, the Israelites did not conquer every population of every city. Throughout the northern and southern portions of Palestine, there were pockets of resistance; there were cities which had not even been attacked, and certainly there were cities which were still occupied by enemy troops. Once the land is distributed, then the individual tribes taking that portion of land will have the responsibility of removing the groups of people in their territory. You will certainly recall the guile of the Hivites of Gibeon in Joshua 9. Because of that alliance, Joshua was pulled into war immediately with a five-king alliance (Joshua 10). None of this was a problem; it all fell within the realm of God’s plan for Israel, as we carefully studied.

For from Y^howah it was to strengthen their heart to encounter Israel—the war; in order to completely destroy them; to not be to them a petition for grace [or, mercy], for a purpose of an extermination of them as that which Y^howah had commanded Moses.

Joshua
11:20

For Jehovah allowed them to strengthen their resolve to wage war against Israel, so that they might be completely destroyed that there should be no reason for an appeal for mercy for them.

This verse is a complete change of pace for Joshua’s usual writing, primarily because it is filled with infinitive constructs. There are several direct objects which come before the verbs (which is typical for Hebrew); however, since I placed them in that order in my very literal portion of Scripture, it might be difficult to sort out. Let me show you how others have rendered this, and then we will take this apart:

The Amplified Bible

For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that [Israel] might destroy them utterly, and that without favor, as the Lord commanded Moses.

The Emphasized Bible

For from Yahweh came it to pass that their heart was embolden to come out to war with Israel that he might devote them to destruction, that they might find no favour,—but that he might destroy them,—As Yahweh commanded Moses.

NASB

For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, to meet Israel in battle in order that he might utterly destroy them that they might receive no mercy, but that he might destroy them, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Owen's Translation

For from Yahweh it was to harden their hearts to encounter the war Israel in order that they should be utterly destroyed and should receive no mercy but that they should be exterminated as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Young's Lit. Translation

...for from Jehovah it hath been to strengthen their heart, to meet in battle with Israel, in order to devote them, so that they have no grace, but in order to destroy them, as Jevhovah commanded Moses.

³² Since the Kenites never seemed to have a problem with Israel and since their bond with Israel goes back to Moses; they would be included in this group of two who made peace with Israel—however, their good relationship with Israel was taken for granted by this writer of Scripture.

The general meaning of this verse is clear—God has hardened the hearts of the enemies of Israel so that Israel could destroy them and show them no grace, as God had commanded Moses. Now, let's look at the particulars. There is a Piel infinitive construct, two Qal infinitive constructs and two Hiphil infinitive constructs in this verse; roughly 4.75 more infinitive constructs than Joshua places in the average verse. In other words, this is not the type of verb form which Joshua employs regularly. He does use infinitive constructs, however sparingly. In a verse like this, there are so many that they reach out and grab you in the Hebrew. It is a way of capturing the reader's attention or the way of making an important point.

We begin with the conjunction *that, for, because*; the *mîn* preposition (*from, out from, away from*), the sign of the direct object; the proper name for one of the members of the Godhead, the 3rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect of *to be*. In order, this is: **For from Y^ehowah it was**; or, **Because it was from Y^ehowah**. The verb is in the 3rd person feminine singular so that it does not get mixed up with any of the immediately surrounding nouns in this verse. We therefore have an indefinite subject.

This is followed by the preposition *to* and the Piel infinitive construct of *châzaq* (כָּזַק) [pronounced *khaw-ZAHK*] and the root means *to fasten upon, to seize, to grow firm*; and this word came to mean *to be strong, firm, to strengthen*. Strong's #2388 BDB #304. This is followed by the direct object, the masculine singular substantive *heart*, and the 3rd person masculine plural suffix. This gives us: **Because it was from Y^ehowah to strengthen their heart...** More colloquially, we might say: **Because Jehovah allowed them to strengthen their resolve...**

We need to stop here momentarily, although we have dealt with this before. God does not ever, in any way, insert negative volition into someone's heart. God does not place in the heart that which is contrary to its nature. God gave them the strength to act upon their volition—to go forward and do what they desire to do. God does not turn anyone against Himself—people turn against God on their own. God simply gave these Canaanites the strength to go forward with their convictions. We do that by ourselves. With some situations, God just lets what flows out naturally flow out unimpeded. I don't know if this analogy will work or not, but when I had an intelligent student in high school who had been propped up again and again in order to pass and continually wanted to be forced to pass a course, I occasionally told his parents to let things run their normal course; let him make the decisions necessary to fail, and then let him face the consequences, including paying for his own summer school or re-taking the course the next year. For some students who were college-bound, this was top notch advice. They learned to view things with a longer term perspective; they saw the results of their incorrect actions; and they had to pay the consequences of their own actions. Not many parents took this advice (and I gave it out sparingly). God allowed the Canaanites and the Amorites to take their negative volition to its full term. He allowed them to strengthen their own hearts—their own resolve—in opposition to God and in opposition to His people. When a person is given full, unfettered control of his own volition and the results pertaining thereto, he does one of two things: he straightens out his act or he crashes and burns. God allowed the Canaanites and Amorites to play out their hand; to operate on negative signals without a safety net and without any opposition from God. This resulted in their total destruction.

Maybe I can come up with a better situation. I recall someone who continually complained in the office where I worked. It didn't matter what was going on, that person always had a beef, a gripe, a complaint, something that someone else could do better but was not, so she had to bitch about it. Now, you could solve every complaint and problem around her; that is, change every person and circumstance concerning who she had to bitch, and she would discover that, despite the fixing of all things wrong around her, she would still be a gripy, unhappy bitch. Her griping never solved anything; and had every problem been solved around her, that would make no difference whatsoever to her mental state or human character. With the Canaanites and the Amorites, God allowed them to get their way, to pursue the direction of their volition, to work essentially unfettered to set up to do the things that they thought would be the course of action that they should take. God allowed them to meet, to come to an agreement, to get all their troops together to oppose Israel, and then the battle ensued and the natural result was that they lost. God allowed them to strengthen their volition—they chose to strengthen it in opposition to Him and in opposition to the Israelites. That was their own free will and their own volition. God did nothing to determine the direction of their volition, but simply allowed them to strengthen their resolve against Him.

This is followed by the lamed preposition and the Qal infinitive construct of *qârâ`* (אָרָא) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*], which means *to encounter, to befall, to meet*. It is a neutral verb where the meeting could be to hear the Word of God or to go to battle. Strong's #7122 & 7125 BDB #896. This is followed by the definite article and the feminine singular substantive of *mil^echâmâh* (מִלְחָמָה) [pronounced *mil-khaw-MAW*], which means *battle, war*. Strong's #4421 BDB #536. What follows is the direct object indicator and the word *Israel*. Young renders this: *to meet in battle with Israel*; Rotherham: *to come out to war with Israel*; NASB: *to meet Israel in battle*; NIV: *to wage war against Israel*. Literally, we have *to meet the war Israel*; or, *to encounter Israel—the war*. This gives us: **Because it was from Y^ehowah to strengthen their heart to encounter Israel—the war...**

This is all followed by the compound conjunction/preposition *l^ema^can* (לְמַעַן) [pronounced *l^e-MAH-ġahn*], which means *for the sake of, on account of, to the intent of, to the intent that, to the purpose that, in order that*. This preposition emphasizes the cause or purpose of the action. Strong's #4616 BDB #775. Then we have the Hiphil infinitive construct, with a 3rd person masculine plural suffix, of *châram* (חָרַם) [pronounced *khaw-RAM*], which means *completely devoted to, devoted to, or to completely destroy*. Strong's #2763 BDB #355 (& #356). So we now have: **Because it was from Y^ehowah to strengthen their heart to encounter Israel—the war—in order to completely destroy them...** Less literally, we have: **For Jehovah allowed them to strengthen their resolve to wage war against Israel, so that they might be completely destroyed...** God has strengthened and used the negative volition of some in order to bless Israel. Moses, in speaking to the people, referred back to Sihon, the king of Heshbon, who would not allow the people of Israel to pass through his land on the east side of the Jordan. Sihon further came out to do battle against Israel, and lost—his negative volition was ever-present—God did not insert that into his person. God did give him the strength to act upon his negative volition.³³

In the next line, we have the lamed preposition, the negative particle, and the Qal infinitive construct of *to be*, the lamed preposition again with the 3rd person masculine plural suffix; followed by the feminine singular of *t^echinnâh* (תְּחִינָה) [pronounced *t^e-khin-NAW*], which means *grace, supplication for grace; an entreaty, request, petition, or appeal for grace or favor or mercy*. The key here is, that because of the run on their negative volition, the heathen of the land have no reason to request for grace from God or from the Israelites. Strong's #8467 BDB #337. Literally, this is *to not be a petition for grace*. This gives us: **Because it was from Y^ehowah to strengthen their heart to encounter Israel—the war—in order to completely destroy them to not be to them a petition [or request] of grace [or mercy]...** Less literally, we have: **For Jehovah allowed them to strengthen their resolve to wage war against Israel, so that they might be completely destroyed that there should be no reason for an appeal for mercy for them...**

Next we have the explanatory conjunction *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*], which means *because, for, that*. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. This is followed by the lamed prefixed preposition followed, again, by the compound conjunction/preposition *l^ema^can* (לְמַעַן) [pronounced *l^e-MAH-ġahn*], which means *for the sake of, on account of, to the intent of, to the intent that, to the purpose that, in order that*. This preposition emphasizes the cause or purpose of the action. Strong's #4616 BDB #775. This gives us *for the purpose that*. This is followed by the Hiphil infinitive construct, 3rd person masculine plural suffix of *shâmad* (שָׁמַד) [pronounced *shaw-MAHD*] means *to be exterminated, to be destroyed* in the Niphal; *to annihilate, to exterminate* in the Hiphil. Strong's #8045 BDB #1029. This gives us: **...for the purpose of an extermination of them...** The verse ends with *as that [which] Y^ehowah commanded Moses*.

One of the more difficult theological subjects is man's free will versus God's sovereignty. God chooses to have mercy upon the man who has believed in Jesus Christ, who has come to Him for salvation. God chooses to place under wrath those to do not avail themselves of what His Son did for them upon the cross. God knows full well who will choose Him and who will not; God knows this in advance, because He knows the end from the beginning. Keeping these things in mind, it may be easier to sort out Rom. 9:6–26: **But it is not as though the Word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are from Israel; neither are they all children because they are Abraham's [biological] descendants, but "...through Isaac your descendants will be named."** That is, it is not the children of

³³ Moses recalls this in Deut. 2:24–33 what occurred in Num. 21:21–26. God uses the wrath of man to praise Him.. "And as for Me, observe: I will strengthen the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. Then the Egyptians will know that I am Jehovah, when I am honored through Pharaoh, through his chariots and his horsemen." (Ex. 14:17–18).

the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. For this is a word of promise: "At this time, I will come and Sarah will have a son." And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived by one man, our father Isaac; for though not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose in relation to election might stand, not because of works, but from Him Who calls. It was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it stands written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? Emphatically not! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then, it is not on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose, I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth." So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. You will say to me, then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use? If God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among the Gentiles. As He says also in Hosea, "I will call those who were not my people, 'My people,' and her who was not beloved, 'beloved.' And it will be that in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there they will be called sons of the living God." (also, Gen. 21:12 18:10 25:23 Ex. 33:19 9:16 Hosea 2:23 1:10). In reading this passage, it is important to note its thrust. Paul is dealing with saved and unsaved Israel; saved and unsaved Gentiles. God has the right to choose from these the man who is set apart for salvation and the man whose end is destruction. However, this is not simply a matter of eenie meenie minie moe. In case we are under the mistaken impression that God's plan is arbitrary, capricious and unjust, Paul writes: **There is no injustice with God, is there? Emphatically not!** (Rom. 9:14). God choose on the basis of those who are in His Son. He does not choose a man to be saved simply because he is Abraham's seed. We do not have the ability to see the beginning from the end, but God does. He is not surprised when we believe in Him and He is not surprised when we don't. Because He knew prior to their births, God chose Jacob over Esau, even though, morally speaking, Jacob was an inferior human being throughout most of their lives. Because Paul's discussion here is dealing with the salvation of some Gentiles as well as the lost Jews, he does not launch into the answers for "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" (Rom. 9:19). Paul has already covered the logical order of salvation for us: **For we know whom He foreknew, He also foreordained conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brothers; and whom he foreordained, these He also called; and whom he called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. Consequently, to what conclusion are we forced? If God is for us, who can be against us?** (Rom. 8:29–31). God first foreknew us and our decisions; he then predetermined that we would be conformed to the image of His Son. He then called us in time with the gospel. When we believed, He then justified us. There is no injustice in this. Salvation is free; it is our choice whether to take it or not. When God calls us, we certainly cannot resist; but that is because He foreknew us in eternity past.

This is a difficult topic and one which the opposite poles in the discussion over-emphasize one aspect of God's plan over the other. On the one hand, there are the Arminians, who believe that you can gain and lose your salvation. If you willfully sin after being saved—and it varies greatly what sort of sins will cause this—then you can lose your salvation. The essence of that doctrine is that you are saved both by faith and by a relatively mediocre or better Christian life. In some Arminian circles, you might even have to lead a good Christian life in order to retain your salvation. For all intents and purposes, this is salvation by works. On the opposite side of the fence, we have the ultra-Calvinists, who over-emphasize predestination of the saved. Their doctrine is represented by the acronym TULIP. T stands for *total depravity*; U for *unconditional election*; L for *limited atonement*; I for *irresistible grace*; and P for *perseverance of the saints*. *Who* God chooses and *why* is 100% His sovereign decision. We play no part in it other than a lump of clay which has no choice in the matter. If God chooses to save us, then He calls us and draws us and we are irresistibly pulled to Him. The first result is that we believe in Him; the later result is that we choose to be conformed to the image of His Son. These are not real choices but a matter of God's sovereign will. The end result is that a believer will manifest the characteristics of his Father. You will note that the end result of both theologies is the same—a believer, after salvation, acts right. If he doesn't, then he loses his salvation from the standpoint of the Arminian; and he never was saved in the first place,

from the standpoint of the hyper-Calvinist. In other words, some semblance of a decent Christian life is expected from either camp in order for salvation to be maintained or verified. The final result of both theologies is a mixture of faith and works in our salvation.

What is key is that these are not the only choices. If I was to lean toward either one, it would be hyper-Calvinism, as it places all the work of salvation on God; but then does an end run around when verifying that we are really saved. What the correct viewpoint is, is that we do have freewill, which God has graciously given us; and He is sovereign; and He has provided a universe in which our freewill and His sovereignty can coexist. There is no *either-or* dichotomy; that is, that you must be an Arminian or that you must be a Calvinist. The truth is somewhere in the middle and the end result is much different. God gives us the ability to choose for or against Him. In order for us to be saved, we believe in Jesus Christ. God has already done all of the work—His Son died on our behalf and has taken upon Himself the penalty for all of our sins, past, present and future. We merely apprehend this by faith, apart from any human merit. The end result is that some lead an extraordinary life, like Paul; some lead a mediocre Christian life (possibly like some of the Apostles that we hear little or nothing about); and some die the sin unto death, like Ananias and Sapphira (see Acts 5). Some are sentenced to the sin unto death, but recover (Hezekiah or the incestuous man of I Cor. 5:1–8 and II Cor. 2:7–10). What is important is that our salvation is not dependent upon the life which follows. Some of us will lead marvelous, Christian lives; others of us will not—we will become engulfed in the mire of this world. The point is that our Christian life has no bearing upon our salvation. We had to choose one time for God to take us into His fold—we had to place our trust and our faith in Jesus Christ but one time, and from this follows eternal results. Afterwards, what we do is a separate matter from our salvation (other than salvation is required in order to lead any sort of a *Christian* life). That our lives can run the gamut from greatness to deplorable goes hand-in-hand with all of the admonitions that we find in Scripture. At one time, I even thought to myself, they may say that they have believed in Jesus Christ, but the careful observation of their life would indicate otherwise. If they choose to continue to willfully sin, then maybe they just were not saved in the first place. But, that is wrong. The believer out of fellowship acts exactly like the unbeliever.

And so Joshua came in the time that he 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 with their cities, Joshua completely destroyed them.

Joshua
11:21

And so had Joshua come into the land at that time and he removed the Anakim from the hill country, as well as from Hebron, Debir, Anab and from all the hill country of Judah and from all of the hill country of Israel, along with their cities—Joshua completely destroyed them.

The Anakim are probably native to Hebron, but their name is used, as we find it here, as representative of all the groups living in the land of Canaan. Owen gives their name as meaning *long necks*; ZPEB as *necklace* (with a question mark). Apparently they are the taller, if not giants, compared to the Israelites, and are spoken of in almost reverent tones with respect to an enemy (“**Who can stand before the sons of Anak?**”—Deut. 9:2). Let’s examine the **Doctrine of the Anakim (finished!)**. Caleb’s action, covered later in Joshua 15, is likely a part of the campaign. Joshua does not group these events together chronologically, but as he thinks of them.

We notice the mention of the hill country of Judah and of Israel; Edersheim comments: *...a distinction is made between “the mountains of Judah” and “the mountains of Israel.” This, strange as it may sound, affords one of the undesigned evidences of the early composition of the Book of Joshua. “When Judah entered on his possession,” observes a German critic, “all the other tribes were still in Gilgal (14:6 15:1). Afterwards, when Ephraim and Manasseh entered on theirs, all Israel, except Judah, were camped in Shiloh (16:1 18:1), these two possessions being separated by the still unallotted territory which later was given to Benjamin (18:11). What more natural than that ‘the mountain’ given to the ‘children of Judah’ should have been called ‘the mountain of Judah,’ and that where all the rest of Israel camped, ‘the mountain of Israel,’ and also ‘the mountain of Ephraim’ (19:50; 20:7), because it was afterwards given to that tribe?”*³⁴ Keil and Delitzsch also give a rather lengthy explanation as to the differentiation. However, it is fairly simple. This was all written after the conquest of the Land of Promise by Joshua following the 5–7 years of wars. At that point in time, Judah would take possession of her land, which included a portion of the hill country, before any of the other tribes. The remainder of Israel was camped at Gilgal.

³⁴ *The New Bible Dictionary*; editor J. D. Douglas; ©Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1962; ©by W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; p.327.

Then Ephraim and Manasseh would have their land allocated to them. At that point, the *hill country* of Israel was then called *the hill country of Ephraim* (Joshua 19:50 20:7). The remaining tribes were at Shiloh at this time. Then, the remainder was to be divided up among the other tribes. Such a statement indicates that the actual author of this book wrote portions of it immediately after as well as during the time period covered.

One question which pops up at this time is *what if the Canaanites came to Joshua in peace and surrendered to Israel?* Some people become overly concerned with *what if's*. There are a lot of *what if's* which mean nothing, like this. God knew in eternity past what the inhabitants of the land of Canaan would do. They have free will, which means they would not act one way on one day, but, given the same set of circumstances, suddenly behave differently. Free will means that are actions and choices are not arbitrary. We may do things that we don't quite fully understand and even make choices which occasionally surprise us; but that is still a function of free will, which is real. So asking what should Joshua have done if the inhabitants had been on positive signals toward Jesus Christ is like asking what should Joshua do if he suddenly grew wings and his shoe size increased tenfold. When God gave His commands to Moses and to Joshua, He knew exactly what would occur—God knew about the negative volition of 95% of the people of the land of Canaan and He knew about the Gibeonites. Although He did not allow the sparing of any people in His orders to Joshua and Moses, God was cognizant of the duplicity of the Gibeonites and He knew that they would be spared. However, God also knew the deep degeneracy of the other peoples and required them to be destroyed in their entirety. Had Israel believed God and followed Him fully at this time, they remainder of Israel would have been conquered in a very short time by the individual tribes. However, we will soon enter the period of the judges, wherein Israel falls into a great low period.

There did not remain Anakim in a land of sons of Israel—only in Gaza, in Gath and in Ashdod they remained.

Joshua
11:22

There were no more Anakim in the land of the sons of Israel, except some remained in Gaza, in Gath and in Ashdod.

We find a verb used twice here; first it is the 3rd person masculine singular, Niphil perfect of *yâthar* (יָתַר) [pronounced *yaw-THAHR*], which means *to remain over, to remain*. Strong's #3498 BDB #451. I must admit here not knowing which route to take. Either we are referring to the occupants of the land in general, meanings that they were then only found in a couple of different areas—those named in particular. Or we are speaking more specifically of the Anakim and they themselves remain in the given areas. V. 21 sounds like we are speaking of the Anakim most as representatives of those who are in the land. *Anak* is singular in the Hebrew and the addition of the *im* -ending is plural

Joshua 11:22 map

I need a **map** for those other three areas.

Most of us recall the city of Gath, as this is where Goliath came from (I Sam. 17:4). The Philistines occupied this land until the time of David. During David's time and soon thereafter, the king of Gath will be mildly antagonistic toward David (Achish in I Sam. 15), although somewhat later, Gath will be allied with David against Saul (King Achish in I Sam. 27). We will examine the city of Gath further when we come to the life of David. We will wait until we discuss Sampson before we examine the city of Gaza any further. We will examine the city of Ashdod in the early part of I Samuel.

And so Joshua took the entire land, as all which spoke Y^ehowah unto Moses and so Joshua gave her for an inheritance to Israel according to their allotments to their tribes and the land rested from war.

Joshua
11:23

And so Joshua took the entire land, just as Jehovah had spoke to Moses; and so Joshua gave the land as an inheritance to Israel, according to their divisions for their tribes; and the land rested from war.

After Israel, we have the kaph preposition and the feminine plural of *machâlôqeth* (מַחְלֵוֹת) [pronounced *mah-khuh-LOW-keth*], which is translated *course, division, portion* in the KJV. It means *division, allotment, course*. There is a masculine version of the same noun which means *portion, tract, territory*. I don't quite follow the

difference other than it appears, at least here, to deal more with the idea of dividing things up whereas the masculine cognate deals with particular divisions. Later, it became a technical term used for the organization of priests and Levites. Strong's #4256 BDB #324.

God gave Moses and outline of the area which was to be taken out of Canaan in Num. 34. And Moses, when they were on the other side of the Jordan, explained to his people: "For you have not as yet come to the resting place and the inheritance which Jehovah your God is giving you. When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which Jehovah your God is giving you to inheritance, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around so that you may live in security." (Deut. 12:9–10). "Therefore, it will come to pass when Jehovah your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which Jehovah your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you will blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget." (Deut. 25:19). For God had promised Israel: "And I will send an angel before you and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite." (Ex. 33:2). And, after the distribution of property, there would be peace in the land for a time. So Jehovah gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. And Jehovah gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; Jehovah gave all their enemies into their hand. Not one of the good promises which Jehovah had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass (Joshua 21:43–45). Barnes: *These words import that Joshua had overcome all overt resistance. There were, however, many districts by no means thoroughly and finally subdued (xiii. 1–6).*³⁵ Keil and Delitzsch: *The taking of the whole land does not imply that all the towns and villages to the very last had been conquered, or that all the Canaanites were rooted out from every corner of the land, but simply that the conquest was of such a character that the power of the Canaanites was broken, their dominion overthrown, and their whole land so thoroughly given into the hands of the Israelites, that those who still remained here and there were crushed into powerless fugitives, who could neither offer any further opposition to the Israelites, nor dispute the possession of the land with them, if they would only strive to fulfil the commandments of their God and persevere in the gradual extermination of the scattered remnants. Moreover, Israel had received the strongest pledge, in the powerful help which it had received from the Lord in the conquests thus far obtained, that the faithful covenant God would continue His help in the conflicts which still remained, and secure for a it a complete victory and the full possession of the promised land. Looking, therefore, at the existing state of things from this point of view, Joshua had taken possession of the whole land, and could now proceed to finished the work entrusted to him by the Lord, by dividing the land among the tribes of Israel.*³⁶

Edersheim: *To sum up all, we find that the wars under Joshua put Israel into possession of Canaan and broke the power of its inhabitants, but that they latter were not exterminated, nor yet all their cities taken by Israel...Indeed, such a result could scarcely have been desirable, either in reference to the country or to Israel, while, from Exod. 23:28–30 and Deut. 7:22, we know that from the beginning it had not been the Devine purpose. But there was also a nigher object in this. It would teach that a conquest, begun in the power of God and in believing dependence on Him, must be completed and consolidated in the same spirit. Only thus could Israel prosper as a nation. Canaan had been given to Israel by God, and given to their faith. But much was left to be done which only the same faith could achieve. Any conformity to the heathen around, or tolerance of heathenism, any decay of the spirit in which they entered the land, would result not only in weakness, but in the triumph of the enemy. And so it was intended of the Lord. The lesson of all this is obvious and important. To us also has our Joshua given entrance into Canaan, and victory over our enemies—the world, the flesh, and the devil. We have present possession of the land. But we do not yet hold all its cities, nor are our enemies exterminated. It needs on our part constant faith; there must be no compromise with the enemy, no tolerance of his sprit, no cessation of our warfare. Only that which at first gave us the land can complete and consolidate our possession of it.*³⁷

Because of this passage, my thinking is that it was likely that these wars took six years and then Israel rested in the seventh year. We have gone over the Scripture which indicates that six years is at least close to the correct amount of time that the Israelites spent in war with the inhabitants of Canaan.

³⁵ Barnes' Notes, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 381.

³⁶ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, pp. 91–92.

³⁷ Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 327.

We believers, in the Church Age also have a period of rest. We rest from our works when we believe in Jesus Christ. This is our Sabbath. **Therefore, let us fear so that while a promise remains of entering into His rest, that no one of you should seem to come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they [the Israelites in the time of Moses] also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united with faith in those who heard. For we who have believed enter into that rest, just as He has said, "As I swore in My wrath, they will not enter My rest."** (although His works were finished from the foundation of the world). For He has thus said somewhere concerning the seventh day, **"And God rested on the seventh day from all His works."** And again in this passage: **"They shall not enter into My rest."** Since, therefore, it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached of them failed to enter because of obstinacy. He again fixes a certain day, **"Today,"** saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, **"Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."** For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter **that** rest, so that no one fall through following the same example of disobedience...Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:1–11, 16 Psalm 96:11 Gen. 2:2 Psalm 95:7).

Since this completes the initial conquering of the land of Canaan, I should insert what Alan Millard wrote: *Digging into the ruin mounds of Palestine, archaeologists have hit a level of buildings destroyed by fire. At site after site their reports are the same: 'a thick layer of ashes showing the level was brought to an end by a great fire...before the close of the thirteenth century BC' or '...the fortress...was completely razed by fire. The thickness of the destroyed layer was 1.5 metres/5 feet. The city was apparently destroyed in the second half of the thirteenth century BC. A number of cities destroyed about the same time points to a widespread enemy attack. The date fits the time when the Israelites are most likely to have entered Canaan. Many have drawn the obvious conclusion: the Israelites soldiers burnt these places. Unfortunately for archaeologists, enemy armies left the smoking ruins and moved on. They seldom left a notice or a monument declaring, 'We, the Israelites, destroyed this city called Bethel', or anything like that.* Recall that the Israelites were told by God only to leave stones piled upon the ground as a monument to their destruction. They were not to carve any monuments or religious artifacts, save the Word of God, which was to be inscribed on a series of stones. This does not conclusively prove the book of Joshua, as the Philistines were actively involved in a campaign to control Palestine; Aramaeans from Syria had come down from the North; and it is even possible that Pharaoh Merneptah was active in this area. However, what has been discovered seems to be in keeping with the concentrated effort found in Joshua to conquer the land, and then the meandering effort which we will see in the book of Judges. It is also important to note that the Israelites did not burn down each and every city that they invaded. We only have the cities of Jericho, Ai and Hazor mentioned in Scripture. *In these Canaanite cities, where new buildings were put up above the ashes of the destructions, they were usually very different from the old ones. Only in Egyptian garrison towns at Bethshan and Megiddo did life continue much as before well into the twelfth century. Whoever came to live on top of the ruins did not care for the old religion. The temples were not rebuilt, and the Canaanite figures of gods and goddesses made of metal or pottery soon disappear entirely...Setting all this archaeological evidence beside the biblical records, there seems little room for doubt that some of these changes, at least, mark the arrival of the Israelites. They were less accustomed to town life, and were supposed to have a very different religion from the Canaanites, with only one God and no local temples. There was no place for separate city-states when a single nation had control of the land.*³⁸

If you will recall, there is a portion of the book of Joshua found at the end of Joshua 8 which dealt with the worship of Joshua and his people on Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. With reference to time, this appears to be the best place for Israel to stop and to worship God. With reference to location, the Israelites are in the northern portion of Israel right now, relatively close to these two mountains (although the women and children are still back in Gilgal). I do not know whether it is accurate to place the worship service here nor do I have an explanation as to why Joshua placed it at the end of Joshua 8. So, therefore, let's return to Joshua 8:30–35 and cover those last few verses at this time.

³⁸ Alan Millard; *Treasures from Bible Times*; ©1985 by Lion Publishing; pp. 93–95.

Joshua 11:1

Keep in mind that the location of most of these cities, other than Hazor, are simply reasonable, educated guesses:³⁹

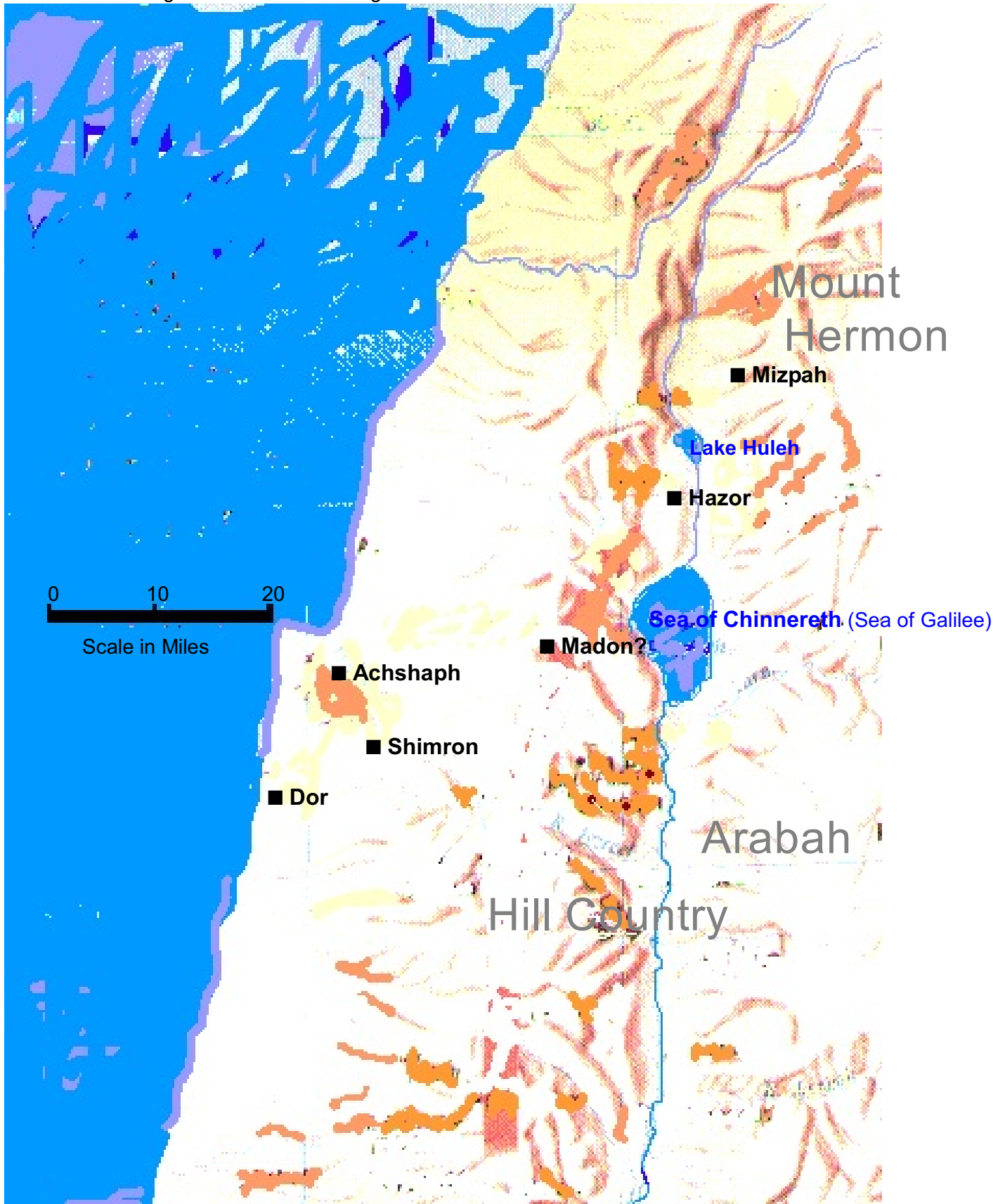


Joshua 11:2

³⁹ This map again was from *The MacMillan Bible Atlas*; 3rd Edition; Aharoni, Avi-Yonah, Rainey, and Safrai; MacMillan; ©1993 by Carta; p. 54.

Joshua 11:8

Keep in mind that several of these locations are disputed, so that this map is only a reasonable guess as to where things are.



Joshua 11:17

I'll need to add some areas in to the next two maps



Joshua 11:22



[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

www.kukis.org

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

[Exegetical Studies in Joshua](#)