

COMPLETING THE TASK

Joshua 11:16 - Joshua 12

Victory in the *north* brought the formal end to Israel's conquest. But before giving the record of how the land was to be apportioned among the tribes, a summary of Israel's triumphs in **Canaan** are recorded.

I. SUMMARY OF THE CONQUEST: (vs. 16-20)

The writing of a summary is similar to writing a journal. It lets you look back and see what God has done.

Thus Joshua took all that land: the hill country and all the Negev, all that land of Goshen, the lowland, the Arabah, the hill country of Israel and its lowland from Mount Halak, that rises toward Seir, even as far as Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon at the foot of Mount Hermon. And he captured all their kings and struck them down and put them to death (vs. 16-17)...The battles fought by Joshua and his army ranged over lands that stretched from *border to border*...from *south to north*...and from *east to west*.

The hill country and all the Negev (the desert area southwest of the *Dead Sea*)...**Goshen**...the **lowland** (the western foothills)...**Arabah** (a depression in the *Jordan Valley*, north and south of the Dead Sea)...and the **hill country of Israel** (the mountains...refers to the central and southern portion of Canaan).

Mount Halak is in the southern desert region. **Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon** was in the far north...*30-40 miles north* of the *Sea of Galilee*...at the foot of Mount Hermon.

He captured all their kings and struck them down and put them to death (vs. 17b)...As God had instructed Joshua to do.

“But the Lord your God will deliver them before you, and will throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed.”

~Deuteronomy 7:23

Joshua waged war a long time with all these kings (vs. 18)...

Victory didn't come easily or quickly...it rarely does in war.

There was not a city which made peace with the sons of Israel except the Hivites living in Gibeon; they took them all in battle. For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, to meet Israel in battle in order that he might utterly destroy them, just as the Lord had commanded Moses (vs. 19-20)...

“When the Lord your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them. Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you.”

~Deuteronomy 7:2-4

“You shall consume all the peoples whom the Lord your God will deliver to you; your eye shall not pity them, nor shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you.”

~Deuteronomy 7:16

The Canaanites day of *grace* was gone. They were evil people who were absorbed in all types of *wickedness* and *idolatry*. They had been given several opportunities to repent and had refused.

- *They sacrificed children and others in pagan worship* (public sacrifice).
- *The book of Genesis states that the cup of the Amorites was “filled up” with iniquity and wickedness.*

They had sinned against God. Against His revelation...

- *In nature (Psalm 19:1)...*and what is natural (**Romans 1:18-20**).
- *In conscience (Romans 2:14-16).*
- *In His recent miraculous works at the Red Sea, the Jordan River, and Jericho.*

Now the sovereign God confirmed the hearts of these unrepentant people in their stubborn unbelief before judging them. *With no repentance came judgment.*

II. SITUATION CONTINUES: (vs. 21-22)

Then Joshua came at that time and cut off the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab and from all the hill country of Judah and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. There were no Anakim left in the land of the sons of Israel; only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod some remained (vs. 21-22)...

Anakim...The giants who had terrified the spies *45 years* earlier (**Numbers 13:33**). Giants recorded to be over *9 feet tall*.

The *incomplete obedience* of **Joshua** some *4,000 years* ago is still having ramifications in the world today...a ripple effect on history. God told **Joshua** to take **all** of the land of **Israel**, but **Joshua** failed to conquer the *giants in three areas: Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod* (**vs. 21-22**). For some reason, **Joshua** had these *three unconquered areas* of obedience.

But before you look to harshly at **Joshua**, look at yourself very carefully. Not only was **Joshua** a person with unconquered areas of obedience, but also many of us have unconquered areas of obedience. Our lives have little **Gaza's**, and little **Gath's**, and little **Ashdod's** that represent those areas where we've not surrendered our all to the **Lordship of Christ**.

Had **Joshua** conquered those *three areas*, history might well have been much different. It's been over *4,000 years* since God said to **Joshua** to "*Take all of the land.*" And he did take all of it, except for **Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod**. Today though, right at this very hour, **Israel** is still suffering because of that unconquered area of obedience! Do you know where **Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod** are located? They are located in what we call today the **West Bank**.

These three little tiny seeds of unconquered obedience fell into the ground, and as they sprung up, they brought forth *defeat, demoralization, and defiance* in the heart of **Israel**. **Joshua's** failure also had a ripple effect on several other events found in the Bible.

- Contributed to **Samson's** downfall. **Gaza** is where **Samson** met a *prostitute* (**Judges 16**).
- **David's** slaying of **Goliath** (**I Samuel 17**). **Goliath** was from **Gath**.
- **Nehemiah 13**...Men from **Judah** married women from **Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab**. And in return...Scripture says that none of their children could speak the language of **Judah**.
- **I Samuel 5**...The **Philistines** captured the **Ark of the Covenant** and took it to **Ashdod**, where they placed it in the temple beside the statue of the god **Dagon**.

When you have unconquered areas of obedience, it will take you down to defeat. It will take to areas you never wanted to go. When you have an unconquered area of obedience, it will cause you to *defy* the living God...it will cause you to *defile* what is sacred and holy in your life.

III. SOVEREIGN COMPLETION: (**vs. 23**)

So Joshua took the whole land (**vs. 23a**)...This condenses and summarizes the history of the conquest from **chapter 1-11**.

So how does **verse 23** stand with **verse 22** and **Joshua 13:1**... **Joshua took the whole land** (**Joshua 11:23**) vs. *...very much of the land remains to be possessed* (**Joshua 13:1**). To the Hebrew mind, *the part stands for the whole*. It only needs to be stated that **Joshua** took *key cities in all parts of the land* to validate the statement that he had conquered the **whole land**.

Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes (**vs. 23b**)...These words look forward and summarize the apportioning and distribution of the land that will take place in **chapters 13-22**.

Thus the land had rest from war (**vs. 23c**)...This shows what walking by faith can accomplish.

IV. SEPARATE CHALLENGE: (**Joshua 12:1-6**)

Now these are the kings of the land whom the sons of Israel defeated, and whose land they possessed beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise, from the valley of the Arnon as far as Mount Hermon, and all the Arabah to the east: Sihon king of the Amorites...and the territory of Og king of Bashan...Moses the servant of the Lord and the sons of Israel defeated them; and Moses the servant of the Lord gave it to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh as a possession (**vs. 1-2a, 4a, 6**)...

This section records the victory that **Moses** had while in the wilderness on the *east side* of the **Jordan** over **Sihon** and **Og**, the **Amorite kings**.

This is the territory that the tribes of **Reuben** and **Gad**, and the **half-tribe of Manasseh** (**Numbers 32**) requested as their *inheritance*.

“Now the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad had an exceedingly large number of livestock. So when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that it was indeed a place suitable for livestock, the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben came and spoke to Moses and to Eleazar the priest and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, ‘...the land which the Lord conquered before the congregation of Israel, is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock.’ They said, “If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession; do not take us across the Jordan.””

~Numbers 32:1-2, 4-5

V. SLAIN CHIEFS: (vs. 7-24)

This gives a detailed list of the **31 kings** defeated by Israel...**16 kings** of southern Canaan and then **15 kings** of northern Canaan.

It may be surprising to find recorded **31 kings** in a land approximately **150 miles** from *north to south* and **50 miles** from *east to west*, but it must be remembered that these **kings** reigned over *city-states* and only had *local authority*.

As to the meaning of **Joshua’s** victories...one historian wrote, *“There has never been a greater war for a greater cause. The battle of Waterloo decided the fate of Europe, but this series of battles in Canaan decided the fate of the world.”*

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- We all have unconquered areas in our lives. We must defeat these strongholds in order to come under the Lordship of Christ.
- When seeking to walk with God, it is important to remember the faithfulness of God. Remember what God has done. That is why it is important to journal when you see God at work and record what you see God doing.
- When seeking God with all your heart...don’t settle for second best...like the tribes of **Reuben** and **Gad**, and the **half-tribe of Manasseh** (**Numbers 32**).