

Studies in the Book of Joshua
Lesson 9 - Joshua 10:1-12:24
The Abundant Life
God Fights for Israel

When you make agreements with the enemy, expect to end up paying a price and having to defend them in order to protect yourself. This is why God's people must remain separated from the world. As you review the whole story of Joshua and the Gibeonites, you can't help but be both warned and encouraged. These events warn us to be alert and prayerful lest the enemy deceive us and we start walking by sight instead of by faith. Then we'll find ourselves making decisions that are wrong and getting into alliances that are dangerous. But there's also a word of encouragement: God can take even our blunders and turn them into blessings. This isn't an excuse for carelessness, but it is a great encouragement when you've failed the Lord and His people.

This section continues on and summarizes Israel's conquest of the southern and northern cities. Two things stand out in this record: It was the Lord who gave the victory; and Joshua obeyed the Lord by utterly destroying the enemy, just as Moses had commanded. The only exception was Gibeon.

Joshua's strategy was to cut across the land and divide it, then conquer the southern cities, then the northern cities. On more than one occasion, he made a surprise attack on the enemy; and the promises of the Lord encouraged him.

The "long time" of verse 18 is about seven years. Israel's failure at Kadesh Barnea at which time Caleb was forty years old to their crossing of the Jordan was thirty-eight years. He was eighty-five when the Conquest was over, which means that at least seven years had been devoted to the campaign.

The Anakim mentioned in 11:21–22 were a race of giants, descendants of Anak, who were greatly feared by the ten unbelieving men who had spied out Canaan. The two believing spies, Joshua and Caleb, didn't fear them but had trusted the Lord for victory. Joshua's victory over the Anakim is recorded in Joshua 11:21–22.

Thirty-three kings are named in Joshua 12, beginning with Sihon and Og whose lands were east of Jordan and had been conquered under the leadership of Moses. The sixteen kings defeated in the southern campaign are listed in Joshua 12:9–16 and the fifteen northern kings in verses 17–24.

Read Joshua 10. Pray and answer the following questions:

1. The king of Jerusalem was concerned that Gibeon had gone over to the Israelite side. What does he do about his concern? (10:3-5).

2. Why do you think Joshua was so quick to come to Gibeon's rescue? What does 10:6-9 tell you about covenants?

3. What part did each of the following play in the victory over the southern alliance?
 - a. The Lord (10:8-14)

 - b. Joshua (10:7-12,17-28)

 - c. All of Israel (10:7-10,18-28)

4. What does 10:22-28 tell you about Joshua?

5. Describe the pattern you observe in 10:29-43. What actions are repeated in the accounts of each conquest?

Read Joshua 11. Pray and answer the following questions:

6. What promise did God make to Joshua in 11:6? Why do you think Joshua needed this promise?

7. What was done to the king, the city and the people of Hazor? (11:10-15)

8. Why did the southern and northern kings decide to fight Israel rather than try to make treaties like Gibeon did? (11:20).

9. Who were the Anakim? Where did they live?

Read Joshua 12. Pray and answer the following questions:

10. Summarize what Joshua 12 is all about?

11. Why do you think the author of Joshua included this list in chapter 12 in his book?

12. Think of a battle for God's kingdom in which you are engaged. How can you be sure you are fighting the battles the Lord has chosen for you, and relying on His power rather than your own skills?

Personality Profile: Jephthah

Overcoming a Tough Start

What hope is there for a child born to a prostitute? Society tends to have low expectations and sometimes downright hostility for people born out of wedlock. That was the case for Jephthah.

The product of his father's affair with a prostitute, Jephthah was not only excluded but cut off from his family. Like many rejects, he led the life of a criminal, though he and his gang of raiders may have harassed the Ammonites more than the Israelites.

To Jephthah's surprise, when Israel faced war with Ammon, the leaders in his home town came looking for him to deliver them. They offered no apology, just merely appealed for help. To his credit, Jephthah agreed to help them after negotiating his terms, and God gave him the victory.

Jephthah's life is a good illustration of the truth that God does not judge people on the basis of appearances. He can understand any background and use any set of circumstances to accomplish His will.

Commentary provided by Warren Wiersbe and others