

# Sermon Outline

## “AND THE LORD GAVE THEM REST”: A CHRISTIAN READING OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

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### DO NOT BE AFRAID OF THEM (JOSHUA 11:1-14)

#### I. The Fear Factor

#### II. Formation of the Northern Confederacy (11:1-5)

- A. In chapter eleven begins, our attention is turned to Jabin, king of Hazor, the most important city of the north.
- B. When Jabin heard of all that Israel had done, he assembles a coalition of kingdoms to push back the people of God.
- C. This is definitely a much larger coalition than Israel had ever fought! —“they came out with all their troops, a great horde, *in number like the sand that is on the seashore*, with very many horses and chariots. And all these kings joined their forces and came and encamped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel” (vv 4, 5).
- D. This has parallels with the way the Lord deals with us. —God may increase our struggles to test our faith; to give us opportunities to act by faith in him.
- E. How will we respond when we face greater challenges in life?
  - 1. If you were an Israelite confronting the most fearsome military alliance we have ever faced, we would try to remember...
    - a. the past deeds of God.
      - i. The parting of the Red Sea
      - ii. The stopping of the Jordan River
    - b. the promises of God. —Deuteronomy 20:1: “When you go out to war against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and an army larger than your own, you shall not be afraid of them, for the LORD your God is with you, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.”
  - 2. As Christians, we remember...
    - a. the promises in Romans 8:37-39: —“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- b. the work of our Lord Jesus Christ in his death for our sins and his resurrection from the dead.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What happened when Jabin heard of the deeds of Israel? (2) How ought an Israelite soldier respond when we hears of the vast military force arrayed against him? (3) How ought we as Christians respond when challenges in life come our way?

### III. The Lord Speaks to his Prophet General (11:6)

- A. In the event that struggles come our way, always hold on to the Word of God.
  - 1. This is exactly what we see Joshua himself doing in verse 6: “And the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Do not be afraid of them, for tomorrow at this time I will give over all of them, slain, to Israel.’”
  - 2. If you are the leader of God’s army, facing the combined strength of several different armies, these are probably the best words that you can hear.
  - 3. When God says to you “Do not be afraid,” you really don’t have to be afraid!
- B. Where in your life at this moment do you need to hear the Lord say these words to you?
- C. One reason we worry is because unlike Joshua, there does not seem to be any specific promise for us.  
—We do not see anywhere God saying to us, “I will give you this job you want.” Or even, “I will make sure everything goes well for your children, your future.”
- D. Yet, even if God does not seemingly give us words that are specific like Joshua, we still *don’t* have to be afraid.
  - 1. Because Jesus himself told us:
    - “Therefore I tell you, *do not be anxious* about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on” (Lk 12:22)
    - “*Fear not*, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Lk 12:32).
  - 2. How would you apply those promises to your many fears today?
- E. The Lord also gives the tactic by which Israel would overcome the enemy troops.
  - 1. “You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire.”
  - 2. Essentially, the main tactic that God wants Israel to use is to destroy the enemy’s chief advantage—their vehicles.
- F. God has freedom to use whatever means he wants to accomplish his ends.  
—God does not require the same tactic has he did in the case of Jericho (Josh 6).
- G. That said, we must always use the means that God has given to grant us victory from our sins—prayer, Scripture, the fellowship of the saints, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What must we do when struggles come our way? What roles does the Word of God play in dealing with our struggles? (2) Even though God has not given us a specific promise of success in our earthly endeavors, what promise has God given to us?

#### IV. The Battle of Merom Begins (11:7)

- A. So the battle begins.
- B. Verse 7 states: “So Joshua and all his warriors came suddenly against them by the waters of Merom and fell upon them.”
- C. The waters of Merom are about eight kilometers west of the Sea of Galilee.
- D. While we are not told how Israel contacted the enemy, we learn that Israel came upon them very swiftly—“suddenly.”

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) How does verse 7 describe Israel’s assault on the enemy armies? (2) Where does this assault happen?

#### V. The Lord Gives the Enemy Over to Israel (11:8)

- A. The Lord keeps his promise to his children.  
—“And the LORD gave them into the hand of Israel, who struck them and chased them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim, and eastward as far as the Valley of Mizpeh. And they struck them until he left none remaining.”
- B. David Howard comments: “The defeat was a total rout, scattering the enemy in all directions and leaving ‘no survivors,’...” (*Joshua*, 269)

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What does the Lord do to the northern confederacy? (2) What does this tell us about the Lord’s rule over creation?

#### VI. Joshua Obeys the Lord’s Directives (11:9)

- A. Joshua also keeps the Lord’s instructions to him: “And Joshua did to them *just as the LORD said to him*: he hamstringed their horses and burned their chariots with fire.”  
—Just as the Lord keeps faith with Israel, Israel, through Joshua, keeps faith with the Lord. There is reciprocity in this divine-human relationship.
- B. This is precisely the kind of relationship that God wants from us.
  - 1. God wants a people that would respond to his love and entrust their lives to him.
  - 2. Scripture shows us men and women who do live, however imperfectly, according to this divine intention.
  - 3. Questions:
    - Will we be people who listen to God’s Word in spite of all the messages that are swirling in the society around us?

- Will we then live in a way that pleases God, even if that would mean being disadvantaged in the world?

C. May God make us like Joshua, and give us hearts that love him first.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) How does Joshua respond to the Word of the Lord? (2) How does Joshua’s relationship to God a model for us to follow?

## VII. Joshua and Israel Destroy Hazor (11:10, 11)

- A. We come now to verse 10: “And Joshua turned back at that time and captured Hazor and struck its king with the sword, for Hazor formerly was the head of all those kingdoms.”  
—God’s appointed leader, Joshua, takes down Satan’s appointed leader, Jabin.
- B. Hazor was the flagship kingdom of the north.
- C. By striking down this city, the Lord has removed a great rallying point for the kingdoms of northern Canaan.
- D. The rest of God’s nation did their part: Israel “struck with the sword all who were in it, devoting them to destruction; there was none left that breathed. And he burned Hazor with fire” (v 11).

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) How does Joshua deal with the king of Hazor? (2) What was the significance of Hazor? (3) How does Israel deal with Hazor?

## VIII. Joshua Strikes Down the Other Kingdoms (11:12)

- A. All those kings who joined with Hazor were punished as well.  
—“And all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua captured, and struck them with the edge of the sword, devoting them to destruction, *just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded.*”
- B. The reference to the prophet Moses reinforces that Joshua was faithful to the Lord—and was the faithful successor to Moses.  
—Everything that Joshua did in battle was a fulfilment of the Law of Moses. Joshua and Israel are portraits of faithfulness to the Lord.
- C. Yet, we would still have to remember: Victory came from the Lord.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) How does Joshua deal with all the other kings? (2) What was the significance of the reference to the prophet Moses?

## IX. Judgment Is Accomplished (11:13, 14)

- A. The closing verses of this section: “But none of the cities that stood on mounds did Israel burn, except Hazor alone; that Joshua burned.”
- B. Yet the judgment on the Canaanites themselves remained: “But every person they struck with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them...”

C. The Lord had kept his word—he had broken Canaan under the feet of Israel.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What was a possible reason for Joshua's not destroying the other cities? Answer with Joshua 8:2 in mind.

## **X. Do Not Be Afraid for God Can Be Trusted**

**Like Joshua and Israel, we can trust God to come through for us. We can confidently do the will of God, because God has already given us the victory in the Lord Jesus Christ. It may not feel like it right now, with all our struggles and addictions, but God has already made us victorious. To know that we have been made victorious, we have only to look at the life of our King, Jesus. He has died for our sins. He has been raised from the dead. Even more, he has been exalted to the right hand of God. All those things were done for us. Therefore, there is no need to be afraid either of the armies of the Canaanites, the Amorites, and the Hivites; nor of the thousand and one situations that strike fear into our hearts—so long as we keep our eyes fixed on our Savior.**

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) We can trust God to come through for us, because of all that God has done for Israel and for our Lord Jesus. Where do you need to apply this truth in your life today? (2) Some stress and fear is necessary. But when do our fears become bad? (3) How ought we to fight against our fears?