



22 Joshua 11&12 “Burn the Chariots and Hamstring the Horses”

We all deal with battles on a daily basis. Our enemies come from all sides and all kinds of places. Fundamentally, our attacks come from the world, the flesh, and the devil. Whatever our trials might be, we have learned in the book of Joshua that by staying in prayer and Bible study we prepare ourselves for the next battle that is to come into our lives. We have learned that after each battle the children of Israel always went back to a place called Gilgal. It was a place of repentance,

forgiveness, recommitment, and empowerment. Our Gilgal is returning to the cross to have a divine appointment with God where we once again are forgiven, revived, inspired, and empowered.

On Sunday we saw what the Bible calls a “day such has never been before.” That day happened right after Joshua and Israel made their biggest mistake after entering the Promised Land. We learned on Sunday that God turns our messes into messages, and if we listen and respond, He makes magnificent masterpieces out of our messes. In the book of Joshua, we have been learning about how to truly walk in God’s Word and how to rely on His promises. There are so many Christians who are “wilderness Christians” who have not taken the inheritance that is theirs. They are saved, but they look from afar at the Promised Land (I don’t mean “stuff”). I am talking about looking from afar and never really understanding God’s promises and what it means to walk in the Spirit. Their lives lack the fruit of the Spirit because they are “wilderness Christians” instead of “Canaan land Christians.”

We learned that we were not given a physical land such as was given to Israel. We were not promised the territory of the United States, rather, we have been given spiritual inheritances that are in the “heavenlies.” These inheritances are what we studied in Ephesians. These are the promises of God that enable us to live a victorious Christian life. We are called to step into that victorious Christian life that is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We talked about how our “Jerichos” can be things within us or outside of us. We can be plagued by fear, lust, dissatisfaction, problems in our ministries, marriages, families, or

communities. These Jerichos are the rough waters we go through that get in our way of experiencing peace and victory. So, just like Joshua, we are to take up the promises of God and to walk in possessing the "land" so to speak. It is ours. We need only step out on to and in it. We looked at Hebrews chapter 11 that tells us to walk by faith and not by sight. We cannot have victory if we're focused on and overwhelmed by the details of life.

Remember last Sunday that a whole confederation of the kings of southern Canaan came against Joshua. They ended up totally beaten and Joshua shut them up in a cave where he had a stone rolled over the mouth of the cave. They eventually were killed. Let's now look at Joshua chapters 11 and 12.

11 Then it came about, when Jabin king of Hazor heard about it, that he sent word to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Achshaph, ² and to the kings who were of the north in the hill country, and in the Arabah—south of Chinneroth and in the lowland, and on the heights of Dor on the west—³ to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the hill country, and the Hivite at the foot of Hermon in the land of Mizpeh. ⁴ Then 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. ⁵ So all of these kings gathered together, and came and encamped together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel. (Joshua 11:1-5, NASB).

The text describes Israel's enemies as "numerous as the sand on the sea shore." That's how we sometimes feel when we look at what's coming at us. It is so easy to get to a point where we feel overwhelmed. If you ever feel overwhelmed, this message is for you.

In preparation of this message, my mind was directed to the statement about the horses and chariots. Sandy did some research and found out that at this time, Israel didn't even use chariots so chariots and horses coming at them was a big deal. This was definitely something coming at them with which they had little experience. Let's see what God has to say about the horses and chariots.

⁶ Yet the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow at this time I am going to turn all of them over to Israel as good as dead; you shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire." (Joshua 11:6, NASB).

The Lord had to give Joshua reassurance again telling him "do not be afraid because of them." Joshua was looking at an enemy bigger and badder than he had ever seen, and the situation looked unwinnable. Like Joshua, we still need reassurance from the Lord.

It seems like every week I come to something new and I wonder once again if God is going to take care of my problems again.

It's not always a big thing. It's things like typing on this computer right now with "trigger finger" or wondering how I'm going to find my daughter a new car when there are none. It is all very strange because Joshua had just come off of a great high; a great victory over the kings of the south, and yet he was scared to death.

Think about so many in the Bible who experienced great victories only to be overwhelmed and in unbelief right again after their amazing victories (Elijah and Israel in the desert right after Egypt). We talked on Wednesday night about how Elijah, after killing all the prophets of Baal, went into a panic after receiving Queen Jezebel's letter saying she was coming after him. We are so fragile. We are so weak.

In this passage, God once again tells him "do not be afraid." God told him that "tomorrow at this time I am going to turn ALL of them over to Israel."

⁷ So Joshua and all the people of war with him came upon them suddenly at the waters of Merom, and attacked them. ⁸ And the LORD handed them over to Israel, so that they defeated them, and pursued them as far as Great Sidon, and Misrephoth-maim, and the Valley of Mizpeh to the east; and they struck them until no survivor was left to them. ⁹ And Joshua did to them just as the LORD had told him; he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire. (Joshua 11:7-9, NASB).



Let's talk about hamstringing horses. As I said, chariots and horses were like having the ultimate weapon. Israel didn't have any. Back in Deuteronomy 17:16 God specifically told Israel not to acquire a bunch of horses. In 2 Samuel 8:4 King David actually also hamstrung the horses of King Saul. This is not God saying that horses are somehow bad, but rather the temptation to trust in things other than God is wrong, and it is real. This is why in this passage, God is telling Joshua to burn all of the chariots and hamstringing all of the horses. Why is this so important? Because this was all of the power that the world offered, but God was making sure that Joshua put his trust not in horses and not in chariots, but in the God of Israel. So Joshua did as the Lord commanded him to do. He burned the chariots and he hobbled the horses and left them. The world told Joshua and Israel that chariots and horses were needed to win, but God was saying something different.

The world wants to define for us what is important and if we're not careful, we will believe it. The world tells us that a large bank account is important and gives total security. The world tells us that our physical appearance is super important. Men are to be young and muscular, and women are to be thin and sexy. If we drink certain things we can look hip and suave. These are worldly values. The world tries to define what a "good relationship" looks like but sometimes it is an abomination. The world tells us that lives of unborn children have no value and that God-ordained values such as private property rights are selfishness. The world tries to define pleasures and what should please us and fulfill us. The world tries to define my relationship and role with my wife. The world tries to tell us what will make us feel fulfilled. But you know what? The world doesn't have a clue about what we need.

When Joshua hamstringed the horses and burned the chariots he was saying, "What is important to the world has NO importance to me." God is my fulfillment and my strength. I will look to him to be my refuge. *God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1, NASB).* God warns Israel over and over about not relying on "horses and a multitude of chariots."

Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD. (Isaiah 31:1, NIV).

It is so important for us to eschew what the world tells us is success. We must be on our guard to trust in the Lord and Him alone. We need to run from what the world tells us is success. It's always a temptation to fix ourselves to what the world tells us is important, but friends, we are in this world, not *of* this world. We've learned in Joshua that we need to "seek help from the Lord" and it will be there for us in our time of need. Let's move on.

¹⁰ Then Joshua turned back at that time and captured Hazor, and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor previously was the head of all these kingdoms. ¹¹ They struck every person who was in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them; there was no one left who breathed. And he burned Hazor with fire. ¹² Joshua captured all the cities of these kings, and all their kings; and he struck them with the edge of the sword and utterly destroyed them, just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded.

¹³ However, Israel did not burn any cities that stood on their mounds, except Hazor alone, which Joshua burned. ¹⁴ And all the spoils of these cities and the cattle, the sons of Israel took as their plunder; but they struck every person with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them. They left no one breathing. ¹⁵ Just as the LORD had commanded His servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did; he

left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses. (Joshua 11:10-15, NASB).

Obedience brings victory. Disobedience bring defeat.

¹⁶ So Joshua took all that land: the hill country and all the Negev, all the land of Goshen, the lowland, the Arabah, the hill country of Israel and its lowland ¹⁷ 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 and put them to death. ¹⁸ Joshua waged war a long time with all these kings. ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ 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.

²¹ Then Joshua came at that time and eliminated the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, Debir, Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah and all the hill country of Israel. Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. ²² There were no Anakim left in the land of the sons of Israel; only in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod some remained. ²³ So Joshua took the whole land, in accordance with everything that the LORD had spoken to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. So, the land was at rest from war. (Joshua 11:16-23, NASB).

Battles would still occur, but the big war was over. After this we just see skirmishes as the land gets divided up. It's sort of the same way in our own spiritual lives. The big battle is for our soul, but when that is won through the cross, we still have skirmishes for the rest of our lives. God doesn't ever leave us where He finds us. We are all a work in progress.

Chapter 12 is just a bunch of names of people that were conquered under Moses and Joshua. It's a summary of the conquests as Israel came into the Promised Land. This caused me to think about the fact that God doesn't leave His work undone. He will do the work to make us Christ-Like if we turn the transformation over to Him. When the Apostle Paul wrote the little church in Philippi he said,

³ I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. ⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and

confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

*⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,¹⁰ **so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,**¹¹ **filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ**—to the glory and praise of God. (Philippians 1:3-11, NIV).*

That is my prayer for each of you. I want you to understand that God is not going to leave you where He found you. He is in the process of transforming you into His masterpiece. Remember when Joshua and Israel didn't consult the Lord and they made a truce with the Gibeonites. God used that truce for Joshua's good and the good of Israel. It created trouble and discomfort for them. That's the way sin is. It has consequences, but the good news is that GOD IS NOT THROUGH WITH YOU YET! You are a marvelous "work in process."

This transformation takes place when you have that "divine appointment" we talked about. It is falling on our faces and giving it up to God. It is listening to His voice and following where He leads. It is an amazing thing to walk in the will of God. It is a path of peace, love, joy, patience, meekness, and self-control because when you do this, you are walking in the Spirit and your life is producing the fruit of Spirit.

Now burn the chariots and hamstring the horses. There is none like our God! There is none like the God of Israel!

Let us pray.

<p>Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.</p>
