

GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES

CORE PASSAGE: JOSHUA 11:16-23

CONTEXT

The next few chapters of Joshua describe the various battles that the Israelites fought as they took over the land of Canaan. Despite Achan's sin in Joshua 7, the Lord forgave the people and continued to go with them as He had promised Joshua. Joshua 10:42 says, "Joshua captured all these kings and their land in one campaign, because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for Israel." The Lord led Israel in battle, and now the time came for them to divide the land among the tribes.

KEY CONCEPT

God fights for His people and is faithful in keeping His promises.

As you examine Joshua 11:16-23:

- Consider that God fulfilled His promise to drive out His enemies through Joshua's faithful obedience.
- Recognize that the Israelites received the land as an inheritance as God had promised Abraham.



TIMELINE

The Israelites Conquer Jericho, and God Spares Rahab (Joshua 6)

After Judgment Against Achan,
Israel Conquers Ai (Joshua 8)

SESSION STUDY: God's Promises Come to Pass
(Joshua 11)

Israel Defeated at Ai Due to
Achan's Disobedience (Joshua 7)

God Continues to Give Israel Victory
(Joshua 9–10)

The Land Is Divided Among God's People (Joshua 13–21)

Daily Readings

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| ☐ Day 1: Joshua 11:1–23 | ☐ Day 4: Joshua 14:6–15:63 |
| ☐ Day 2: Joshua 12:1–24 | ☐ Day 5: Joshua 16:1–17:18 |
| ☐ Day 3: Joshua 13:1–14:5 | ☐ Day 6: Psalm 50 |



Scan this QR code
to access this session's
Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

JOSHUA 11:16-20

GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PEOPLE IN DESTROYING EVIL.

Notice the totality of the conquest: Circle and count how many times “all” is used in the passage.

16 So Joshua took all this land—the hill country, all the Negev, all the land of Goshen, the foothills, the Arabah, and the hill country of Israel with its foothills— **17** from Mount Halak, which ascends to Seir, as far as Baal-gad in the Valley of Lebanon at the foot of Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings and struck them down, putting them to death.

18 Joshua waged war with all these kings for a long time. **19** No city made peace with the Israelites except the Hivites who inhabited Gibeon; all of them were taken in battle. **20** For it was the LORD’s intention to harden their hearts, so that they would engage Israel in battle, be completely destroyed without mercy, and be annihilated, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

“In unconsciously doing the work of the Lord, men act quite freely, and therefore are justly accountable for doing what it was eternally predestined they should do. Philosophy cannot plumb such a depth by its own line, but Scripture clears up the mystery.”¹

—A. W. Pink (1886–1952)

Key Concept: God fights for His people and is faithful in keeping His promises.



God's promises are less like a one-time winning lottery ticket and more like an investment with a solid rate of return. God builds waiting into our lives. We wait for His promises, and as we wait, our faith grows and deepens. All that He says will come to pass, but not all at once. The Israelites of Joshua's day learned that lesson. In Exodus 23:30, God told His people about the conquest to come: "I will drive them out little by little ahead of you until you have become numerous and take possession of the land." In other words, God's perfect plan for them—to keep them from being at a disadvantage while they conquered the land—was going to take a while. Joshua 11:18 confirms it certainly did: "Joshua waged war with all these kings for a long time."

How does waiting for God's promises grow and deepen our faith in Him?

Throughout the years of waiting, God worked His purposes for His people. Joshua 11:20 tells us that the Lord's intention was to harden the hearts of the kings so that they would engage Israel in battle and Israel would be on the defensive against aggression.

We must remember that more than four hundred years passed between God's initial promise to Abraham that his descendants would inherit the land and Joshua's conquest. In Genesis 15:16, God told Abraham that the sin of the Amorites was not yet complete. By Joshua's day, their sin was full-grown. God's hardening ensured that no mercy would be shown to those who didn't want to follow the Lord. Like Pharaoh in Egypt, the Canaanites would not bend their knee to God. Four hundred years of unwillingness to yield their hearts to the Creator God drove them to the place of complete destruction and annihilation, just as the Lord has commanded Moses.

How is God's justice seen in this passage, and how does it convict you to share the gospel?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

JOSHUA 11:21-23

GOD FULFILLED HIS PROMISE TO GIVE HIS PEOPLE THE PROMISED LAND.

Highlight the areas that the Israelites captured and find them on a Bible map.

21 At that time Joshua proceeded to exterminate the Anakim from the hill country—Hebron, Debir, Anab—all the hill country of Judah and of Israel. Joshua completely destroyed them with their cities. **22** No Anakim were left in the land of the Israelites, except for some remaining in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. **23** So Joshua took the entire land, in keeping with all that the LORD had told Moses. Joshua then gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. After this, the land had rest from war.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

THE SCRIPTURES: The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy.

Key Concept: God fights for His people and is faithful in keeping His promises.



Some passages of Scripture can feel like sidewalks, just getting us from point A to point B. But Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 3:16 that all Scripture is profitable. There are no “sidewalks” in the Bible. This little section may feel like a bridge to get us to the end of the war, but Joshua 11:21-23 is a main road.

The Anakim aren’t household names today, but they were legends in their time. They terrified the spies in Numbers 13–14, and the fear of them caused the Israelites to turn back from entering the promised land forty years prior. Only two of the twelve spies—Joshua and Caleb—believed that God would keep His promise to drive out the giants. They were not scared in Moses’s day, and they were not scared when they stood on the battlefield with the Anakim.

The Israelites, who once cowered in fear, now cut off the giants in the land as if they were nothing. The Anakim are merely an endnote to the great conquest. Before it was all over, like the boss stage at the end of a video game, these enemies needed to be faced. But they were no match for God’s people. The big obstacle proved to be a false fear. All earthly fears prove to be false when you are walking with God.

How does faith in God’s promises protect us from fear?

Joshua 21:45 tells us: “None of the good promises the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed. Everything was fulfilled.” After the final battle, the Israelites were at rest. The war was finally over, and it was time to settle in their new home. Just as God had promised, each tribe received their allotment. The text calls it an inheritance, an important word to emphasize. Israel received the land as a child receives the fruit of a father’s labor, just as we receive the benefits of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection. God works, we watch; He gives, we rest. In the end, God’s Word never fails. Everything is fulfilled.

CHRIST CONNECTION



God’s promise of rest and a land inheritance to Abraham, Moses, and the Israelites was fulfilled through Joshua as a type of Jesus. God’s promise of rest and a new heaven and new earth to fallen man will be fulfilled through Christ (Hebrews 4:8-11).

How does the history of Israel build your faith as you consider all the promises God fulfilled for them?

GROUP EXPERIENCE



PROMISED REST

*Draw what rest looks like in your everyday life. Then use single words to describe what rest is.
Finally, define what true rest in Christ looks like.*

DRAW

DESCRIBE

DEFINE

How is true rest in Jesus more than just physical peace in this world?



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HEAD

How does the historical proof of God's work in this world help you know He is true to His Word?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 50, imagining yourself among the summoned crowd. How might God be confronting you and comforting you? Pray through the psalm as your response.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HEART

How does the faithfulness of God help you conquer all your fears?



HANDS

What are you putting off that you need to, by faith, step into with God today?

