

## Conquering the Land (1400 – 1100 BCE)

### *General Conquest of Canaan*

Readings: *Joshua 9:1-12:24*

#### ***Reflections:***

- These passages continue with a type of warfare that is shocking to most. Yet, it is there in Scripture as a reminder that wiping out our enemies, the thing we humans think is the best way to get rid of our problems, doesn't work. This is God's judgment against all of the people living in this area and yet in the overall narrative it is a part of a larger revelation of truth about what works and what doesn't work.
- The treaty Joshua enters into shows he is not perfect but he still remains one of the most untainted leaders of the story of Israel. The main lesson to learn is outlined well in the text. "The men of Israel sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the Lord." In other words they went on good solid data but did not ask God's insight or direction. What was the result? The data they had was used to deceive them. We must never forget that even when something seems completely obvious and all the data is present, you still must seek God's leadership in both large and small issues. In fact, many times God's purpose goes against the known data so it makes it doubly important to learn this lesson.
- The hailstones are an easier miracle to conceive than the sun standing still. God can do anything but the sun standing still seems to cause most people the biggest challenge. It is similar to the shadow going back up the steps which suggests that God was bending the light or making the whole world go in reverse. Anyways, God is God and these are accounts of people trying to describe what they experienced. The miracle stories underscore God can do anything he likes. It isn't logically inconsistent with his power and personality. It is just humanly mind blowing.
- In these wars we will find this statement repeated "The Lord was fighting for Israel." This is a theme in the story of Israel. Israel is viewed as weak and God is the warrior fighting battles for them. Therefore, it is also repeated over and over, "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous."

- The notion of hanging someone on a tree has some parallel imagery to crucifixion. It was the most shameful, horrible way to die and would publically cause people to be terrified.
- Hamstringing the horses again seems terrible but we should note that this went totally against the common sense of warfare of that time. The horses and chariots were the military assets that would have made Israel better equipped for war. Yet, Israel was not to be a warring nation. Chariots and horses were the equivalent of tanks and the Lord did not want Israel to have an arsenal. The point is that the Lord fought for Israel to drive out the nations and it was not based on Israel's military prowess.
- Key statement: "As the Lord commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua, and Joshua did it; he left nothing undone of all the Lord commanded Moses." This shows Joshua's faithfulness and submission.
- Another frightful sentence: "For it was the Lord himself who hardened their hearts to wage war against Israel, so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the Lord had commanded Moses." This is paralleled to God hardening Pharaoh's heart. Their hearts were already hardened but God added his own judgment on it by hardening it to the point where they would not turn back from destroying themselves.
- The conclusion: "So Joshua took the entire land, just as the Lord had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. The land had rest from war." War here is still viewed as a negative thing. Peace is God's world. War, even if initiated by God, is the result of our fallen condition and sin, and is unnatural to creation. The land itself was at unrest when war was happening. Creation is groaning. All the record-keeping of kings shows the detail to which Israel liked to track things. They clearly liked to be organized, make their lists and check them twice.