**Every Power that Would Destroy Us Was Chained**

Joshua 11:1-23

**Good Morning Beloved,**

* Beginning a New Year Well….[[1]](#footnote-1) How is your heart?
  + Is there anything that is making you draw back from God?
    - From God’s people?
      * Thought the connections would be easier…
    - From God’s purposes?
      * Thought I’d be further along…
    - From God’s precepts or laws?
      * Thought it would be more fun…
  + Is there anything that is scary.. makes you want to run away?
    - There was a pastor who tells the story… an allegory of a Christian… who is tempted to leave the path he is on to heaven because along the path are two lions.
      * There had been other men who saw the lions on the path and turned back.
        + Their names were Mistrust and Fearful.
  + But for those who have read the story… the lions along the path are chained…. But Christian can’t see the chains.
    - The Porter… named Watchful… calls to Christian and says… don’t fear the lions… they are chained… this is a trial of faith… to see reveal those who have none and to find out those who do.
      * Christian reasons… there is nothing but death the other way…
        + Walks between the lions…

Hearing their roars and feeling their hot breath…

But he stays on the path and the power that would destroy him remained chained.[[2]](#footnote-2)

* + It’s an allegory…
    - But our passage today is a real story.
      * There is a man who terrorizes the people of God like a lion.
        + But he is chained.
  + In the midst of the very real threats… God shows his majesty and authority…
    - Why?
      * So that your heart would be established by faith alone.

Reading of God’s Word

***11:1****When Jabin, king of Hazor, heard of this, he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph,****2****and to the kings who were in the northern hill country, and in the Arabah south of Chinneroth, and in the lowland, and in Naphoth-dor on the west,****3****to the Canaanites in the east and the west, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites in the hill country, and the Hivites under Hermon in the land of Mizpah.****4****And 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.****5****And all these kings joined their forces and came and encamped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel.*

***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. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire.”****7****So Joshua and all his warriors came suddenly against them by the waters of Merom and fell upon them.****8****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.****9****And Joshua did to them just as the Lord said to him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.*

***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.****11****And they 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.****12****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.****13****But none of the cities that stood on mounds did Israel burn, except Hazor alone; that Joshua burned.****14****And all the spoil of these cities and the livestock, the people of Israel took for their plunder. But every person they struck with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them, and they did not leave any who breathed.****15****Just as the Lord had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the Lord had commanded Moses.*

***16****So Joshua took all that land, the hill country and all the Negeb and all the land of Goshen and the lowland and the Arabah and the hill country of Israel and its lowland****17****from Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir, as far as Baal-gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. And he captured all their kings and struck them and put them to death.****18****Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.****19****There was not a city that made peace with the people of Israel except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. They took them all in battle.****20****For it was the Lord's doing to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, in order that they should be devoted to destruction and should receive no mercy but be destroyed, just as the Lord commanded Moses.*

***21****And Joshua came at that time and cut off the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua devoted them to destruction with their cities.****22****There was none of the Anakim left in the land of the people of Israel. Only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod did some remain.****23****So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.*

**Preaching of God’s Word**

1. **The Threat (vs. 1-5)**
   1. The end of the last chapter… with Joshua’s campaign in the South… is now mirrored by the efforts in the North.
      1. It is not a popular... as last week’s section had…
         1. supernatural moments…. The sun standing still in the sky
         2. supremacy moments… the dirty Israelite feet on royal Amorite necks.
      2. But this week is once again God showing His faithfulness to His purposes….
         1. John Calvin notes two things…
            1. #1 – human advantage - if all the pagan nations had rallied together with their technology… they would have overwhelmed God’s people coming out of 40 years in the desert.

POINT: God does not allow his people to be overwhelmed by their enemies.

He kept the enemies back unto the time appointed by HIM for their defeat.

Pastoral Pause: Is your heart overwhelmed by things?

Remember… recite… memorize Ps. 115:1ff

*115 Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory,  
    for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!*

*2Why should the nations say,  
    “Where is their God?”  
3Our God is in the heavens;  
    he does all that he pleases.*

* + - * 1. #2 – divine promises – God told Moses when you go into the land I will drive out the nations… gradually.

Deut. 7 - ***22****The Lord your God will clear away these nations before you little by little. You may not make an end of them at once, lest the wild beasts grow too numerous for you.****23****But the Lord your God will give them over to you and throw them into great confusion, until they are destroyed.****24****And he will give their kings into your hand, and you shall make their name perish from under heaven. No one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them.*

POINT: God does not allow his people to be passive in his purposes.

He keeps his people in a place where they must continue to walk by faith.

Pastoral Pause: Is your heart indifferent to things?

Remember… recite… memorize… Lam. 3:22-24

***22****The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;  
    his mercies never come to an end;****23****they are new every morning;  
    great is your faithfulness.****24****“The Lord is my portion,” says my soul,  
    “therefore I will hope in him.”*

* 1. Why*?*
     1. Because the threats are real.
        1. Jabin… King of Hazor commands 40,000 soldiers.
           1. Jabin means… “the Intelligent”
           2. Commands an “horde” from the most important and powerful city in the region… Hazor.

Last week… the army from the south was massive group of ONE particular soldier.

NOW… the coalition it seems to be drawing in people from everywhere….

The text is conveying what happened in the 1992 Olympics when the NBA all-stars comprised the DREAM TEAM.

* + - 1. Not only is Joshua going up against “Jordan… Bird… and Magic”…
         1. This norther coalition has the most technological advanced weaponry of the day…

They have horses and chariots.

Scholars note… “This coalition presents the most significant threat to Israel’s success in conquering the land.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

* + 1. Beloved, Joshua’s trials got more difficult.
       1. Perhaps your walk by faith will be increasingly difficult.
          1. Listening to an elder at another church… God has matured me to go through things now that would have crushed me as a younger man.

*Hebrews 11:****11****For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.* ***12****Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees,****13****and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.*

* + - * 1. There is an irony in quoting Hebrews at this point…

Lift up your drooping hands for Joshua is going to be fighting Jabin.

In Hebrews… the next verse says… ***14****Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.*

Instead of striving to draw back in fear from the lions…

Strive for holiness.

Instead of striving to attack others who seek you ill…

Strive for peace…. Forgive… bless… pray.

* 1. Transition: While the army that resembles the sand on the shore gathers… there is a clear…

1. **The Tactic (vs. 6-15)**
   1. God takes out the army in… a single day.
      1. But before the battle… the God gives a reassuring word… just like at Ai and just like the southern Amorite army.
         1. The tactic is brilliant in many ways…
            1. Joshua immediately attacks.

Why is that helpful?

The army has not assembled the chariots yet.

The military had to breakdown and reassemble the chariots for each battle.

So in attacking them quickly… Joshua neutralizes their best weapons.

* 1. But that is not the “real” tactic.
     1. The real tactic is… *Joshua did to them just as the Lord said to him:*
        1. The reason the tactic was successful is…
           1. ***8****And the Lord gave them into the hand of Israel,*
     2. The details of the victory are significant here because Hazor…
        1. Is the head of the kingdoms (vs. 10)
        2. It is on a main trade route running north and south…
           1. This is the most impressive victory in Joshua’s campaign… strongest and most important stronghold.[[4]](#footnote-4)
  2. POINT: Chariots and horses are a poor comparison to the LORD’s strength.
     1. Ps. 20:7 - ***7****Some trust in chariots and some in horses,  
            but we trust in the name of the Lord our God*.
        1. Question: Why did they hamstring the horses?
           1. Animal cruelty?

No… it removed a large tendon on the back of the hind leg so that it would not be used for military purposes.

* + 1. Why is that important?
       1. Because they will steal your heart away from the LORD.
          1. The people of God would be tempted to trust in chariots… the horses… and buy their own “power”.
       2. Once again there is any irony…
          1. Pharoah was seen as great in Moses’ day because of his chariots and horses (Ex. 9:34-10:1).
          2. Jabin was seen as great in Joshua’s day because of his chariots and horses.

One lies at the floor of the Red Sea…One falls by the waters of Merom.

* 1. While smoke rises from one city… and others are taken as plunder… the tactic that brings about the conquest is…
     1. *15 Just as the Lord had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the Lord had commanded Moses.*
        1. Dale Ralph Davis says it well…
           1. “… what marks a model leader is not the size of his chariot force,
           2. The number of females in his harem,
           3. Or the presence of peacocks in the royal zoo,
           4. But an obedience to God’s commandments that leads God’s people to be faithful.”[[5]](#footnote-5)
  2. Transition: This last portion is critical friends.
     1. And I ask “How is your heart?’ there is really only one reason you can answer that question with hope…
        1. That answer is… GRACE.

1. **The Triumph (vs. 16-23)**
   1. There is a long warfare (vs. 18)… against monsters.
      1. The division of the country there into five parts; namely,
         1. the hills,
         2. the land of Goshen, that is, a pastoral land near Gibeon (Jos 10:41);
         3. the valley,
         4. the plains
         5. and the mountains of Israel.[[6]](#footnote-6)
      2. They fight people in Gath.
         1. The land that produced Goliath… that is the territory that Joshua invades.
      3. There is a terrifying description for why the battles rage…
         1. *20 For it was the Lord's doing to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, in order that they should be devoted to destruction and should receive no mercy but be destroyed, just as the Lord commanded Moses.*
            1. Once again this is Pharaoh revisited… the people hardened their hearts… but the primary reason is that the LORD hardened their heart.[[7]](#footnote-7)
      4. POINT: God is triumphant not only on the battlefield of horses and chariots…
         1. But he is triumphant on the battlefield of the heart to accomplish his purposes.
            1. What is it that separates Rahab the prostitute from Jabin the King?
            2. What is it that distinguishes the Gibeonites in their worn-out donkeys from Pharaoh and his chariots?

It is the GRACE OF GOD to make known his steadfast love.

1. **Conclusion**
   1. So Pilgrim is walking on the path as the lions’ breath on his neck…
      1. In that chapter… he says there are four things that fortify him on his journey…
         1. #1 – When I think about what I saw on the Cross
         2. #2 – When I look upon my embroidered coat
         3. #3 – when I look into the document I carry next to my heart in my coat
         4. #4 – when my thoughts are warmed about where I am going
   2. Beloved, those four points from *Pilgrim’s Progress* pair with our story too.
      1. #1 - Joshua had a mighty victory in one day… but on
         1. Good Friday… Jesus Christ put all his and your enemies under his feet by dying on the cross (Eph. 1:21-22).
      2. #2 - Joshua may have looked ill-prepared for the battle in his day against chariots and horses… but he was dressed with power from God.
         1. In light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, you, Christian, are dressed in the full armor of God (Eph. 6:10ff).
      3. #3 – Joshua heard the comforting assurances of God’s promises on the eve of the battle….
         1. It is the WORD of God that exposes our own inclination to follow Mistrust and Fearful… Hebrews 4:12 - ***12****For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*
      4. #4 – Joshua conquered the Promised Land… not as a “law-maker”, but as a “law-keeper”.
         1. But even better for you, Beloved, Jesus Christ has secured the eternal rest that is granted only by grace and received by faith alone.
            1. Heb. 3:12ff - ***8****For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on.****9****So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God,****10****for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.*
   3. Therefore remember… ever power that would destroy us is chained.

**Prayer (Jude 24-25)**

***24****Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,****25****to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.*

**Benediction (1 Thess. 5:23-24)**  
***23****Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.****24****He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.*

1. On *Things Unseen* a daily podcast from Ligonier Ministries, Sinclair Ferguson draws on a Covenant renewal prayer that he learned while visiting a Methodist congregation, “I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed for you or set aside for you, exalted for you or brought low for you. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to your pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and Blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you are mine, and I am yours. May it be so. And may the covenant which I have made here on earth, be confirmed in heaven. Amen and Amen. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Dale Ralph David, Joshua, 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. K. Lawson Jr. Younger, [“Joshua,”](https://ref.ly/logosres/eerdmanscommbbl?ref=Bible.Jos11.1-11&off=589&ctx=sing+groups+(11%3a3).+~This+coalition+prese) in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, ed. James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Richard Hess, *Joshua, 235.* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Joshua, 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, [*Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/jfbcomm?ref=Bible.Jos11.16&off=78&ctx=ew+of+the+conquest.+~The+division+of+the+), vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 152. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See Westminster Confession of Faith V.6 – “As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden; from them He not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had; and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan; whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)