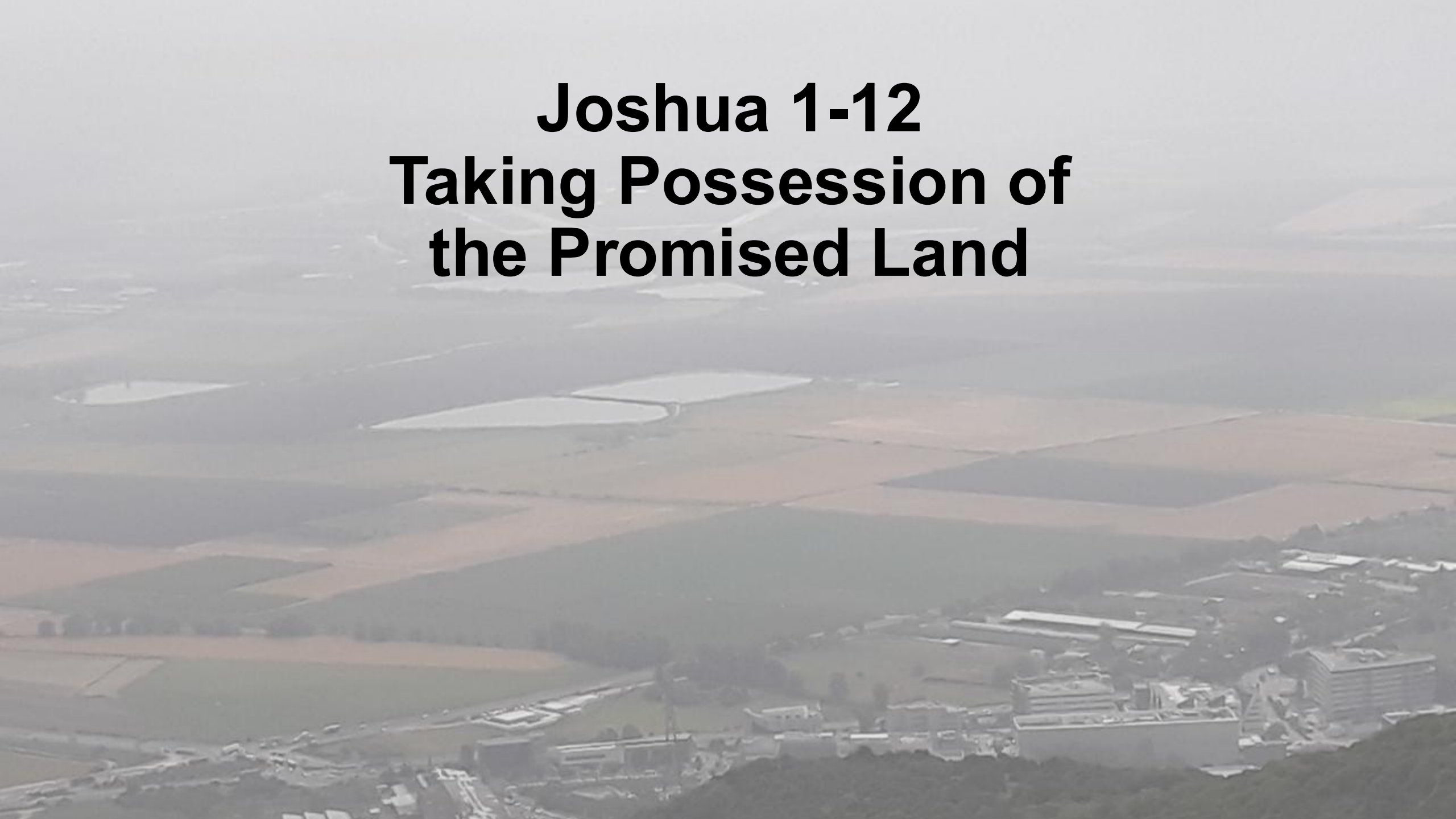
Joshua 1-12
Taking Possession of the Promised Land



Context of Joshua

- Moses was the leader who brought the Israelites out of Egypt.
- The Lord has taken him home.
- The mantle has fallen on Joshua.
- He has big shoes to fill.
- But he has the same God.

Context of 2 Timothy

- Paul was the leader who had launched the gospel to the Gentiles.
- The Lord is about to take him home.
- The mantle is falling on Timothy.
- He has big shoes to fill.
- But he has the same God.

Context of Joshua

- A transition of leadership.
- The Lord gives a pep talk for the new leader.
- The assurance that he has the same God.

Call to Courage

- Josh 1:6 *Be strong and courageous* …
- Josh 1:7 … *be strong and very courageous* …
- Josh 1:9 … *Be strong and courageous* …

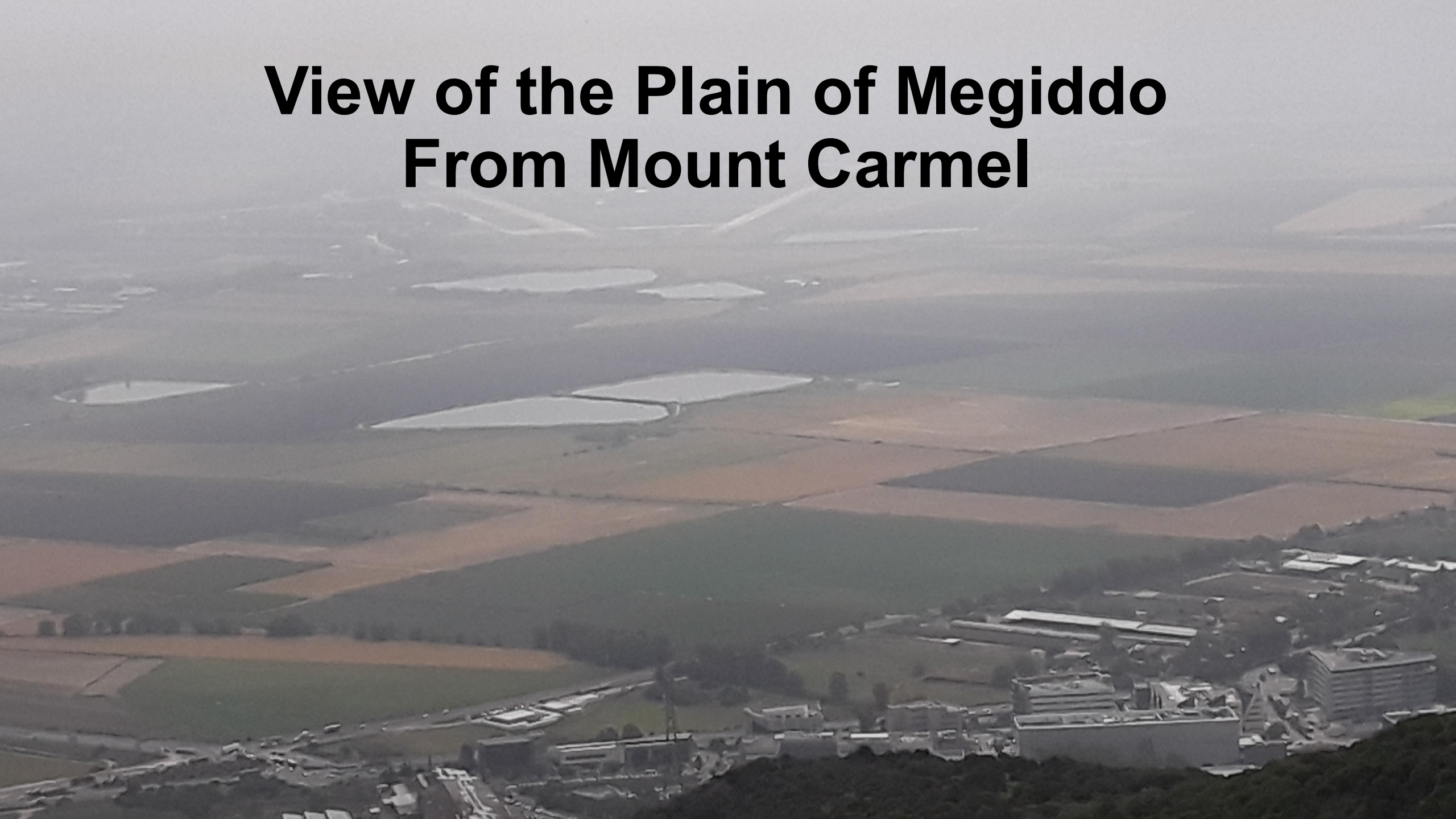
Call to Obedience

- Josh 1:7 … *be careful to do according to all the law* …
- Josh 1:8 … *that you may be careful to do all that is written in it* …

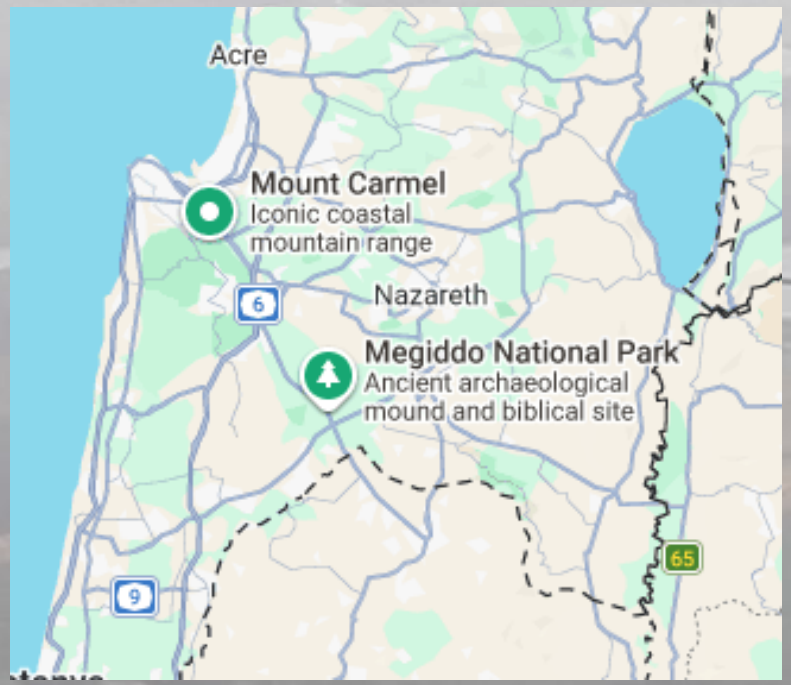
Promise of the Lord's Support

- Josh 1:3 … *I have given it to you* …
- Josh 1:5 … *I will not fail you or forsake you* …
- Josh 1:9 … *for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go*.

View of the Plain of Megiddo From Mount Carmel



The Plain of Armageddon

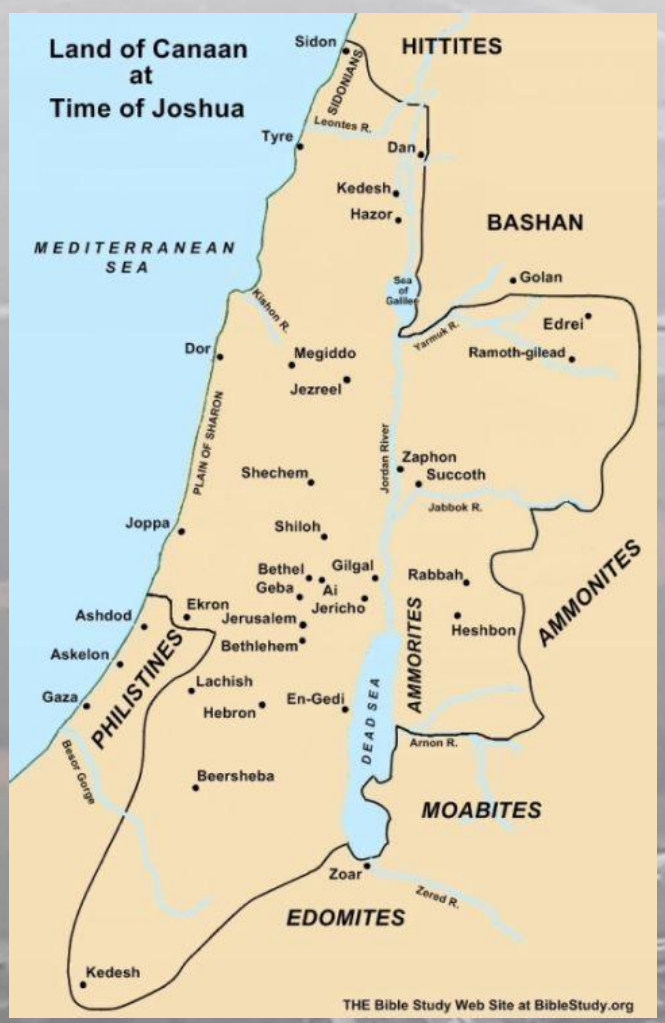


The background is the view from Mt. Carmel looking southeast towards Megiddo. The water on the east is the Sea of Galilee.

This background is the Plain of Armageddon, called *Har-Magedon* in Scripture.

Rev 16:14-16 describes the world getting together for the War of Armageddon.

Conquest Map



- Background is view of Megiddo plain (SW of sea of Galilee), as seen from Mt. Carmel.
- Mt. Carmel is where Elijah dispatched the prophets of Baal.
- East of Jordan already conquered by Moses in Deut 2:24-3:11.
- The enclosed area is what Joshua will conquer.
- At the start of the battle they are east of the Jordan river, near Jericho.

The Plain of Megiddo

- ***In Joshua's day*** **the Lord gave Israel victory over the Northern Coalition here.**
- ***Today*** **it is a peaceful place.**
- ***In a future day*** **the battle of Armageddon will be here!**
- **The Lord will give Israel a resounding victory against an International Coalition!**

Joshua's obedience

- Courage is not fearlessness …
- Courage is forging ahead with what you have to do …
- Courage is obeying the Lord …
- Despite your fear!

Joshua’s obedience

- Joshua takes charge as a leader.
- First he made sure of the tribes who were allotted land east of the Jordan river.
- Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh.
- That they would take part in the battle.

Joshua's obedience

- He settles on Jericho as the start of the battle.
- He sends two spies secretly.
- Spies meet Rahab, who helps them.
- She tells them that the land is terrified of them.

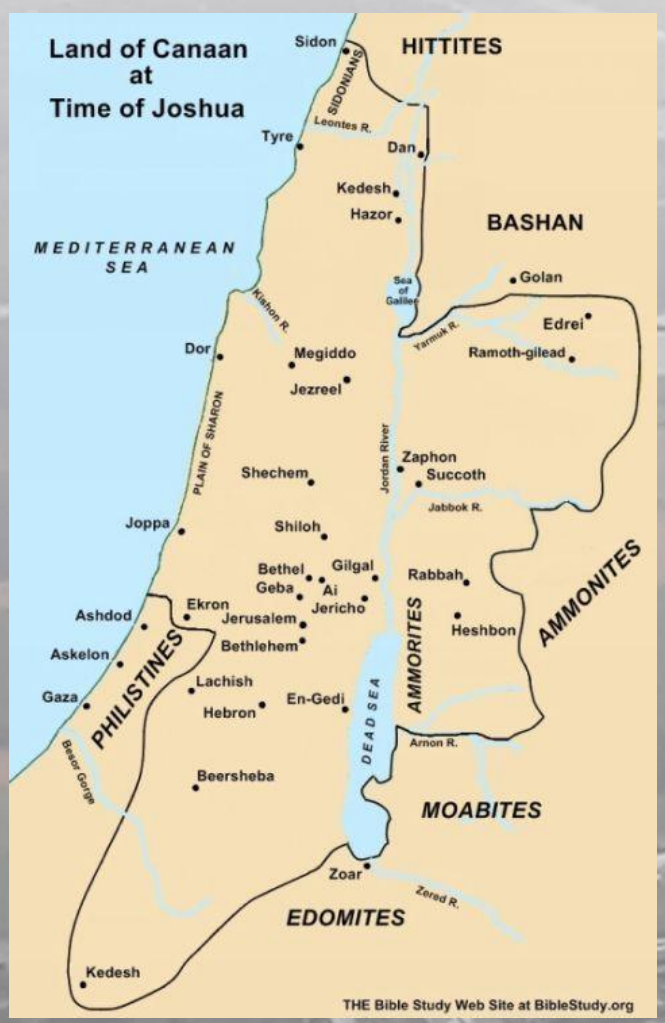
Joshua's obedience

- Rahab hides the spies.
- She protects them.
- God honors her.
- She is an ancestor of David.
- She is in the genealogy of Christ, through both Joseph & Mary!

Joshua's obedience

- The spies bring back a good report!
- Joshua prepares to attack Jericho.
- But it is April and the Jordan is flooded.
- They need to cross the Jordan first!

Conquest Map



- Israel is encamped east of the Jordan opposite Gilgal, near Jericho.
- Israel needs to cross the Jordan.
- It is April, and the Jordan is in flood!

Joshua's obedience

- The priests carry the ark into the Jordan.
- The Jordan is stopped!
- Israel crosses over on dry land!
- Imagine the chagrin of Jericho when they heard news of this!
- They were probably depending on the Jordan to protect them!
- So then they depended on their wall!
- Oops!

Joshua's obedience

- To remember the crossing, Joshua builds a memorial of stones from the Jordan.
- Israel now realizes how God is with them, even though Moses is no more.
- But there is important business they need to do with God.

Joshua's obedience

- **The children born in the wilderness were not circumcised.**
- **They were the warriors of this day.**
- **Circumcision was the first order of business.**
- **Matt 6:33 *Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.***

Joshua's obedience

- First the spiritual sin needs to be dealt with.
- First they need to obey the Lord in circumcision.
- Then they would obey the Lord in battle.

Joshua's obedience

- Interestingly, this was the perfect time for Jericho to attack Israel.
- Because of the circumcision, they were incapacitated to do battle.
- But Israel's enemies were too terrified!
- And Israel healed.

Joshua's obedience

- Israel also celebrated their first Passover in the Holy Land, at Gilgal, just about a mile from Jericho.
- The manna from heaven ceased that day.
- They ate the fruit of the land.

Victory at Jericho

- Israelite army marched around Jericho once a day for 6 days.
- On the 7th day they marched around 7 times.
- Then blew trumpets, and the walls fell down.
- They conquered the city, and saved Rahab and her family.

Utterly Destroyed

- Josh 7:21 *They utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey*.
- All but Rahab and her family.
- This was in obedience to Deut 20:17 … *you shall utterly destroy them …*

Utterly Destroyed

- Why this genocide?
- Some reasons from https://crossexamined.org/genocide-god-old-testament
- They had 400 years to repent, during Israel's Egyptian captivity.
- They had prophets like Melchizedek.

Utterly Destroyed

- There is an exception given in scripture.
- Not all cities were to be destroyed.
- Deut 20:10-11 describes how to offer terms of peace.
- Deut 20:12-14 describes how to make war, sparing women, children and animals.
- Deut 20:15 *Thus you shall do to cities that are very far from you ….*
- Distant cities were spared from genocide.

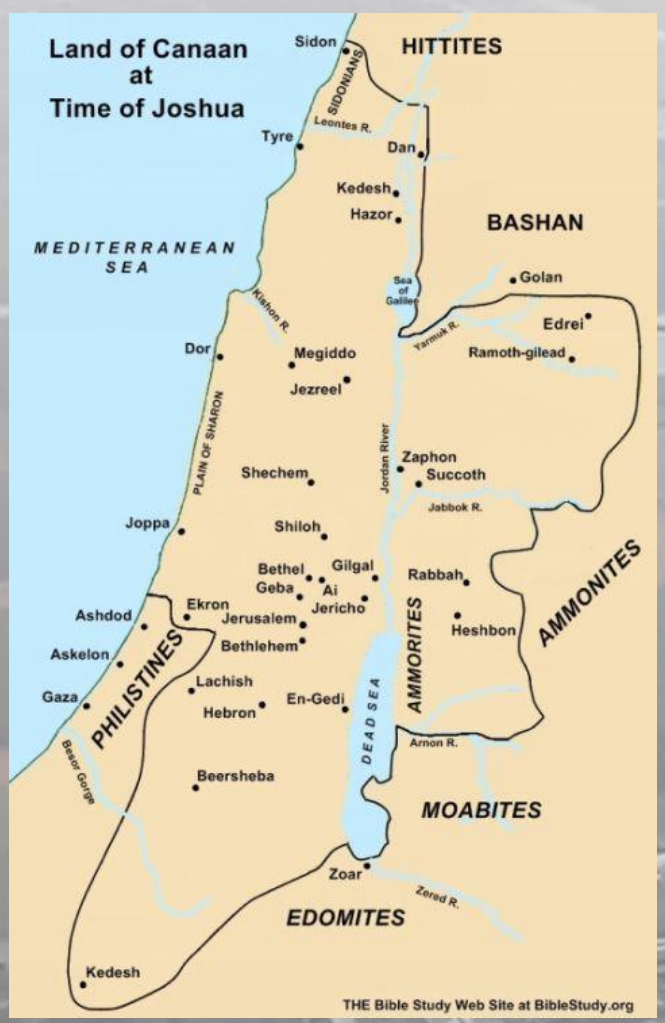
Utterly Destroyed

- **But cities in Canaan were to be utterly destroyed.**
- **Deut 20:16 *Only in the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance you shall not leave alive anything …***

Utterly Destroyed

- **Why such a harsh punishment?**
- **The Canaanites could corrupt the God's people.**
- **Deut 20:18 *in order that they may not teach you to do according to all their detestable things which they have done for their gods, so that you would sin against your God.***
- **It was to prevent Israel from sin.**

Conquest Map



- Jericho is conquered.
- They move on to Al, west of Jericho.

Defeat at Al

- But one family sinned at Jericho.
- Jericho was *under the ban*.
- They were forbidden to take anything for themselves.
- The family of Achan of Judah sinned.
- They took some silver, gold and cloth.

Defeat at Al

- Joshua and all Israel did not know of this sin.
- They went on to battle at Al.
- They were overconfident.
- But they lost 36 men.
- They were disheartened.

Defeat at Al

- God speaks to Joshua and tells him that there is sin.
- That is why they lost the battle.
- The people of God prevailed in one battle.
- But they lost another battle due to sin!
- Our sin destroys our service!

Defeat at Al

- Heb 12:1 *… Let us lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us …*
- Sins like bitterness, greed, idolatry ...
- Encumbrances like distractions, unwise priorities ...

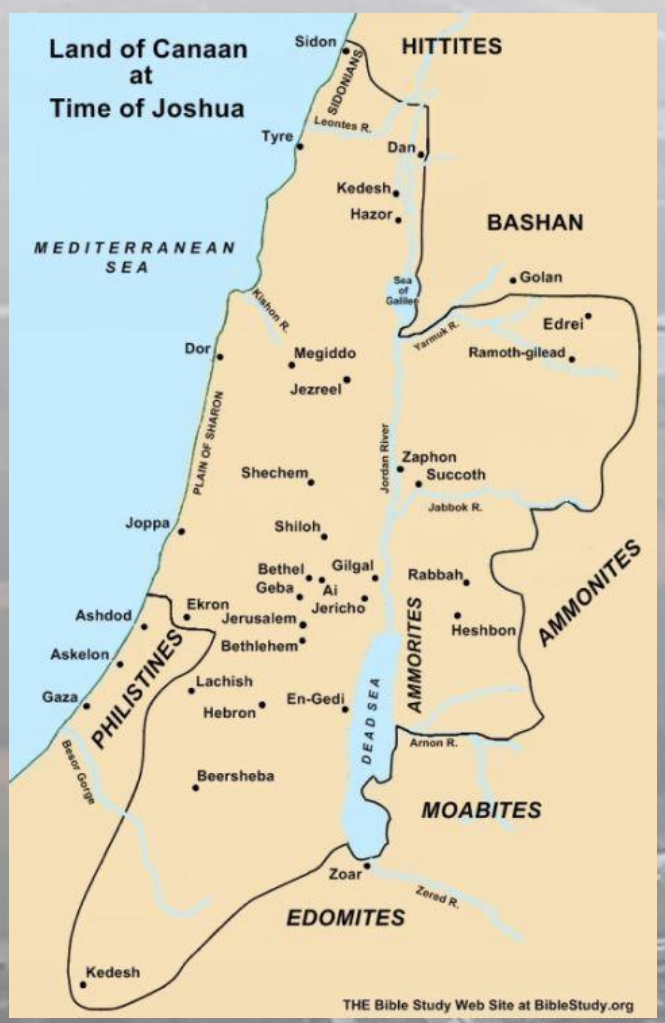
Defeat at Al

- **2 Tim 2:21** ***Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.***
- **When we are cleansed from sin, we are prepared for service.**

Victory at Al

- **Josh 8:1 *… I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land.***
- **After they dealt with the sin, the Lord promised them victory!**

Conquest Map

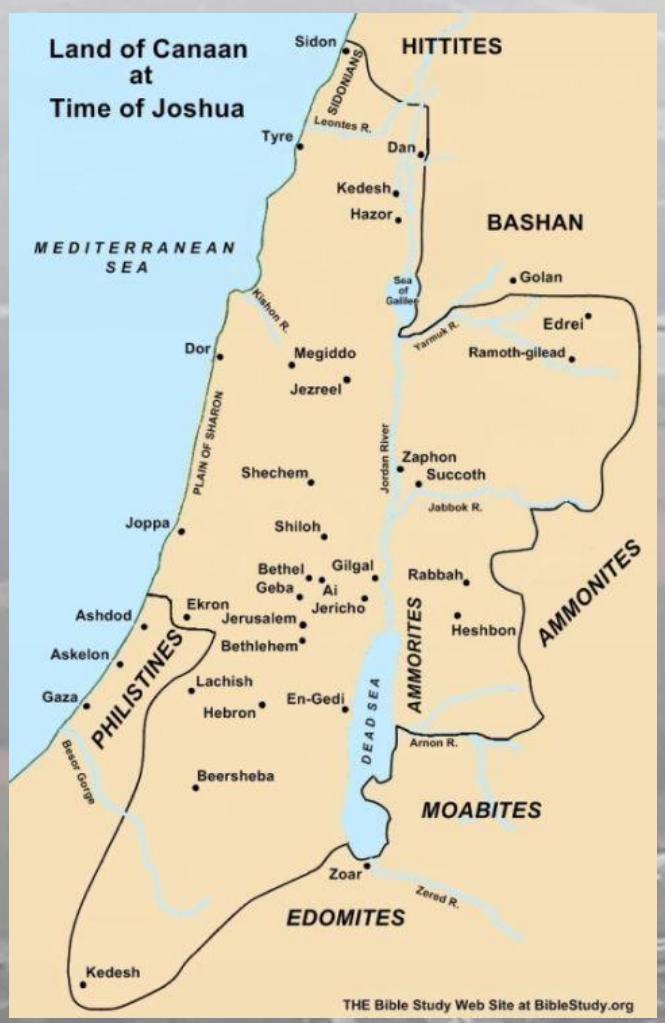


- First attacked Al from the east, and pretended to run away.
- Drew enemies away from Al.
- Then another flank attacked Al from the west, and set the now defenseless city on fire.
- Then the enemies were terrified.

Victory at Ai

- The two-pronged attack worked!
- Then the supposedly fleeing east flank attacked the now terrified enemies.
- All inhabitants destroyed.
- King of Ai was hanged.

Conquest Map



- Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim are near Shechem, NE of Jericho.
- This area had just been conquered.
- There was worship to be done at this point.

Ratification of the Covenant at Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim

- The territory they had conquered included Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim.
- They were required by Moses in Deut 27:12-13 to recite the law here.
- Six tribes on Mt. Gerizim for Blessings.
- Six tribes on Mt. Ebal for Cursings.
- Levites in the middle valley.

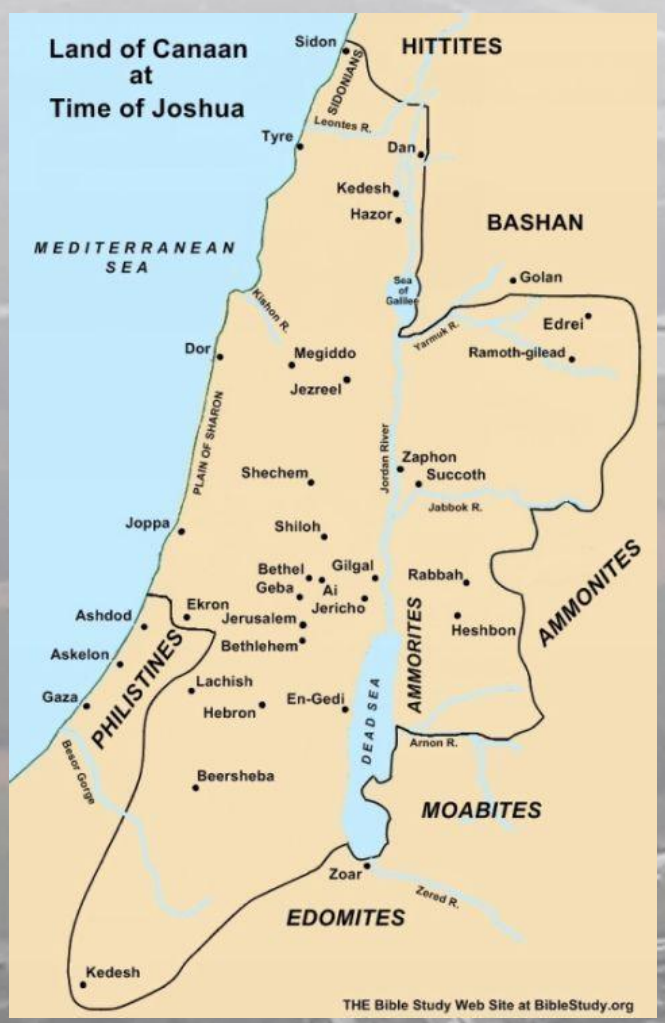
Ratification of the Covenant at Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim

- Then the Levites recited the blessings and cursings from Deut 27:15-28:68.
- Curses about idolatry, dishonoring parents, distorting justice, sexual perversion, murder, …

Ratification of the Covenant at Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim

- Blessings of prosperity, children, victory in battle, abundant rain and crops, …
- Most importantly, being a holy nation for the Lord Himself.

Conquest Map

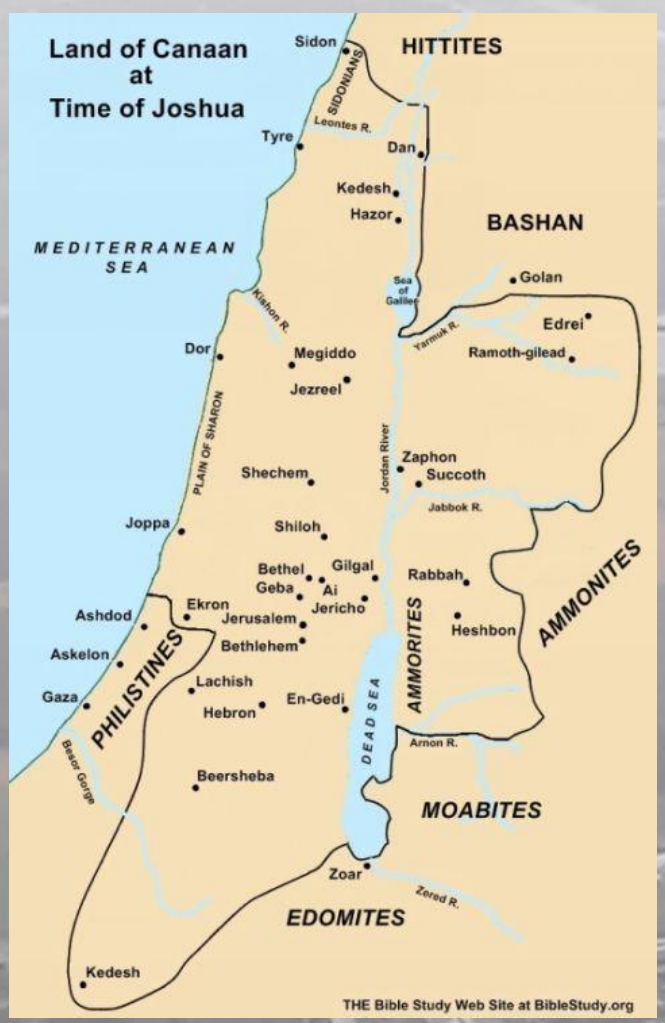


- Jericho has fallen.
- Al has fallen.
- The five armies of the Amorites was the next battle.

Victory over the Amorites

- 5 kings of the Amorites formed a coalition to defeat Israel.
- But Israel defeated them.
- And the Central Canaan, including Jerusalem was taken over by Israel.

Conquest Map



- Jericho has fallen.
- Al has fallen.
- The area from Shechem to Kadesh-Barnea to the Jordan have been taken.
- They turn their attention to the north, near the Sea of Galilee.

Victory in the North

- The Amorites, Hitites, Perizites, Jebusites and Hivites formed the Northern Coalition.
- But God reassured them.
- Josh 11:6 *… Do not be afraid of them for tomorrow at this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel…*
- We do not need to be afraid when we are following the Lord.

Victory in the North

- Josh 11:18 *Joshua waged war a long time with all these kings*.
- Often our obedience to God is a hard and long struggle.
- Josh 11:20 *For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts in order that He might destroy them …*
- Israel was God's instrument.

Conquest Summary

- Most of the land had been conquered.
- Josh 12:24 … *in all thirty one kings.*
- Israel had taken on 31 kings and their armies and defeated them!
- It was a resounding victory!

Conquest Summary

- Canaan formed coalitions to destroy Israel …
- And lost …
- One day an evil coalition will gather at the Plain of Megiddo to battle Israel …
- Likewise, they will lose …
- The world has never yet seen carnage like that!

Summary

- Israel had a Call to Courage.
- Israel had a Call to Obedience.
- Israel had an Assurance of Victory.
- Sin resulted in defeat.
- There was forgiveness, and then they had many victories.
- But it was a long struggle.

Summary

- Our war against sin is like Israel's conquest.
- We too have a call to courage and obedience.
- And a take-no-prisoners attitude towards sin.
- Like Israel, our war against sin is a struggle all our life.
- But, through Christ, we will win!