**Northern Kings Defeated**

Words of advice: Don’t bring fists to a knife fight. Don’t bring a knife to a gunfight. Don’t bring a gun to a tank fight. Don’t bring a tank to a battleship fight. Don’t bring a battleship to a nuclear missile fight. Colin Powell took preparedness to a new level with the “Powell Doctrine”. His strategy was to bring not equal weapons, but far superior weapons and numbers to a battle to achieve overwhelming superiority. Best advice: You will survive 100% of the fights in which you do not participate. In our study of Joshua chapters 11 & 12, we see Israel going up against an army of superior strength but God was on their side.

Chapter 11 begins in a similar fashion to chapter 10, that is a king convinces other area kings to join forces against Israel. This time it was the northern kings led by Jabin king of Hazor who united. This alliance was much larger than that of the southern kings Israel fought in chapter 10. They ruled over a vast area of Canaan representing Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites and Hivites. Their troops made a huge army described as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They were also equipped with horses and chariots. The Jewish historian Josephus estimated the army consisted of 300,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry and 20,000 chariots. God reassured Joshua that he should not be afraid of the army and instructed him to hamstring the horses and burn the chariots. The chariots represented a serious threat to Joshua’s army since they could inflict large numbers of casualties among the Israelites who had no chariots. Joshua did as instructed, putting the horses out of commission and burning the chariots (see Psalm 20:7). Israel attacked the army and routed them, killing all the inhabitants of the cities and their kings. They took plunder and livestock from the towns which they kept as their possession except for Hazor which they burned. Verse 16 tells us that Joshua captured the entire land. They had previously taken the southern kingdoms so they were in control of the land that God has promised. They even defeated the Anakites, the unusually large people their spies so greatly feared 40 years earlier. The chapter ends with the sentence “Then the land had rest from war”. Matthew Henry wrote that they had peace from the Canaanites, not peace with them.

Chapter 12 describes all the lands and kings that were defeated by Israel beginning with those east of the Jordan River which were taken before Moses died. Their land was given to the Reubenites, Gadites and half tribe of Manasseh. Following is a listing of the kings west of the Jordan beginning with the king of Jericho. There were 31 kings west of the Jordan which were defeated.

The northern kings probably thought their forces were vastly superior to that of Israel, especially since their chariots would wreak havoc in battle. Joshua may have thought he was taking a knife to a gunfight until God eased his mind. In reality, it was the Canaanites who were outnumbered, they were taking Satan to a fight with God.

Verse 19 of chapter 11 notes that not one city made a treaty of peace with Israel except the Hivites living in Gibeon. This would suggest that these kings had available the same plan the Gibeonites had, make peace and worship God and avoid a fight. Verse 20 says that God hardened the hearts of the others to wage war against Israel. This was similar to the heart condition of Pharoah whose heart was also hardened by God. Many would point to this as callousness by God, picking and choosing who will accept Him and who won’t. My personal belief is that Pharaoh and the northern kings had free will and totally rejected God who then abandoned them to their own destruction. Matthew Henry wrote “*As Pharoah’s heart was hardened by his own pride and willfulness first, and afterwards by the righteous judgement of God, to his destruction, so were the hearts of these Canaanites”.*

God equips us with weapons for spiritual warfare (see Eph. chapter. 6). We also have 3 very effective tools: prayer, His Word and the company of fellow believers. Not using those is taking a knife to a gunfight.