

One might think that the conflict that was involved in inheriting the land would get easier. But it is not that way at all.

**1. There may come times of great conflict in the story of the church.**

**1. There may come times of great conflict in the story of the church.** Joshua had defeated central and southern Canaan, but now a king of Hazor in the far north gathered a gigantic army against Joshua<sup>□1</sup>. All of the kings of the northern area united to attack Joshua. It was a greater number than Israel had faced before, like the proverbial sand on the seashore. Unlike the Israelites they had horses and chariots<sup>□2</sup>. They assembled at the 'waters of Merom'<sup>□3</sup>, a hilly area in the north, where chariots could not easily be used. They were gathering their forces there but were planning to attack Joshua further south.

□1 11:1-3  
□2 11:4  
□3 11:5

• *The wicked could see that their days of wickedness were coming to an end*

There come times of great conflict in the story of the church. God has His own reasons for allowing the forces of evil to gather themselves for great assault against the believer or against the church. It may happen because the wicked can see that the people of God are themselves gathering strength. These Canaanites of the north could see that their days of wickedness were coming to an end. Their coalition was an attempt to prevent the judgement of God that would soon come upon them.

**2. God protects His people in such times of conflict**

**2. God protects His people in such times of conflict.** The greatest danger was fear. It was frightening to know of such an immense gathering. At times the opposition against the people of God may be terrifying.

God gives a word of encouragement to Joshua: 'Do not be afraid of them'<sup>□1</sup>. God gives an assurance that the conflict against this mighty foe will not take a long time. 'Tomorrow at this time I will hand them over to Israel...' <sup>□2</sup>. God gives guidance. The word 'tomorrow' is a hint to Joshua that he must commence battle immediately. Before the assembled forces have time to attack him, he attacks them<sup>□3</sup>. Since they are still at the waters of Merom, they are not yet able to use their chariots. There is great victory<sup>□4</sup>. The enemies are pursued until no survivor is left<sup>□5</sup>. The horses are immobilised and the chariots burned<sup>□6</sup>. When the church of Jesus Christ faces fearful opposition it generally does not last very long. The greater the conflict the greater the help of God. The Lord Jesus is able to stop anyone 'by the breath of his mouth' <sup>□7</sup>. A little word from Jesus and the mighty force comes to an end easily and abruptly.

□1 11:6  
□2 11:6  
□3 11:7  
□4 11:8  
□5 11:8  
□6 11:9  
□7 2 Thessalonians 2:8

• *The greater the conflict the greater the help of God*

**3. God allows evil to continue until it is ripe for His annihilating judgement**

**3. God allows evil to continue until it is ripe for His annihilating judgement.** After this victory over Hazor Joshua is easily in control of the whole of Canaan. A number of northern cities are destroyed. Hazor and its population are destroyed<sup>□1</sup>. Other cities were captured and their populations executed<sup>□2</sup> but only Hazor was burnt to the ground<sup>□3</sup>. The cattle in the various towns were taken but the populations were executed. The iniquity of the Canaanites had become full and was ripe for extermination <sup>□4</sup>.

□1 11:10-11  
□2 11:12  
□3 11:13  
□4 11:14-15

• *When sin has been allowed to have its freedom and to come to its fullness, God acts in judgement*

**4. The enemies we most fear are soon to be defeated**

• *The Christians' inheritance*

• *Jesus is our Joshua*

Joshua 11:16–23 summarises the conquest. The area is defined<sup>□1</sup>. The execution of the kings<sup>□2</sup>, the trouble Joshua went to<sup>□3</sup>, the thoroughness of the destruction of Canaanite culture, since the people were totally hardened<sup>□4</sup> – are each mentioned. Joshua 11:20 throws some light upon the reason for the extermination of the Canaanites. God punished sin with sin! One thing God can do to punish sin is to give sin its freedom to become unrestrained. God can ‘harden’ the sinner. This is not a matter of God’s **creating** any inclination to sinfulness. God does not **create** sin. But it is a matter of letting the sinner have his way. When sin has been allowed to have its freedom and to come to its fullness, God acts in judgement. It is this that is the explanation of the extermination of the Canaanites. Their wickedness was unimaginably great. God handed them over to their own appetites for sin, and He let the sin of the Canaanites go as far as it wanted. Then when the iniquity was full, He brought in His people and commissioned them to bring His judgement upon the Canaanite nations. They had filled up the measure of the sinful ways. The defeat of wickedness and the protection of His people were two sides of the one activity of God.

4. **The enemies we most fear are soon to be defeated.** It was at that time that the ‘Anakim’ were exterminated<sup>□1</sup>. They were a pre-Canaanite people who were formidable bandits and lawless fighters<sup>□2</sup>. They were feared by Israel because they were like the Nephilim, the ‘criminals’<sup>1</sup> of Genesis 6:4 <sup>□3</sup>. They were the enemies who more than any other were feared by Israel – but they were defeated easily when God decided to act.

Christians have an inheritance. It is partly experienced in this life. It is reaping fruitfulness from the Holy Spirit by sowing to the Spirit. It is being honoured by God. The Christian experiences the power of God’s kingdom and enjoys everlasting liveliness from the presence of God.

The Christian’s inheritance is that area of life which he or she is invited to conquer for God. It is laying up treasure in heaven. It is honour and glory visibly radiating from our very bodies. It is Jesus’ saying ‘well done!’. It is land – as solid as the land of Israel – a portion of the new heavens and new earth in which is righteousness.



We Christians must remember that Jesus is our Joshua. Jesus leads us into victory. Jesus defeats our ‘Anaks’ – the formidable enemies we fear most. Jesus leads us to conquer the land God wants to give us.

Note

1. See M.A. Eaton, *Genesis 1–11* (Preaching Through the Bible), pp. 122– 125.

□1 11:16–17a  
 □2 11:17b  
 □3 11:18  
 □4 11:19–20

□1 11:21–22  
 □2 see Deuteronomy 2:10, 21; 9:2  
 □3 see Numbers 13:22, 28, 33

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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