

## THE GREAT HORDE

Immediately following the events we studied last Week, another coalition force rose to fight Israel. Last Week, 5 kings from the south partnered to fight Israel. This Week, several more kings from the north banded together to end Israel’s march across the Promised Land—or so they thought.

Joshua faced the biggest military threat in his entire life, by far. Both their size and military equipment far exceeded any foe previously defeated. Just how much military power are we talking about? Josephus, a 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish historian, speculated this northern confederacy included 300,000 infantry soldiers, 10,000 cavalry troops, and 20,000 chariots.

Not only did the enemy have major advantages in men and fighting technology, but they would also be fighting on their home turf. They knew every ravine, cave, and vantage point, not to mention the very short supply line for food, weapons and reinforcements, never more than a few miles away.

Instead of saying, “Woe is me...not this again,” Joshua sought the Lord, trusted in his promises, and went to fight.

### JOSHUA 11:6–9, 23

<sup>6</sup>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.” <sup>7</sup>So Joshua and all his warriors came suddenly against them by the waters of Merom and fell upon them. <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>And Joshua did to them just as the Lord said to him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

<sup>23</sup>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.

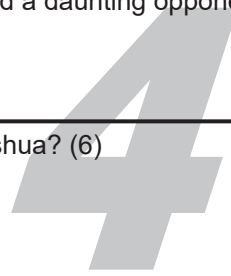
### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

"Faith is the supreme effort of your life— throwing yourself with abandon and total confidence upon God." Oswald Chambers wrote one of the most famous Christian devotionals of all time with *My Utmost For His Highest*. The QR code links to a devotion called *The Faith to Persevere*. Chambers eloquently hits on a theme we've repeated in this study—that the reward of our faith is the strengthening of our faith. God stretches our faith that we might have greater faith.



## DISCUSSION

Describe a time when you faced a daunting opponent.



ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

1. What did the Lord say to Joshua? (6)
2. What happened next? (7-9)
3. Summarize the results of Joshua’s entire conquest. (23)

4. What attributes has Joshua exhibited as God's leader and how are they manifested in this last major battle?

INTERPRETATION

5. Give a report of your spiritual battle(s) that you've been fighting this semester. How can this group encourage you as you head into a break?

APPLICATION

Maybe you're tired of persevering. Maybe you haven't seen any fruit from your faithfulness. Don't give up. If you need some encouragement, talk to your coach today.

# VICTORY!

WEEK 11

## A STUDY OF JOSHUA

### STUDY NOTES

#### GRIT

What if I told you that success wasn't primarily based on IQ, your family background, wealth, physical health, or attractiveness? In 2013, Angela Lee Duckworth researched the question, "What causes success?" She examined numerous fields including sales, income production, and education. Surprisingly, the best single predictor of achievement wasn't what we might think. It was grit—"passion and perseverance for very long-term goals." Those with grit live a marathon, not a sprint.

Duckworth's study showed grit best predicted someone's likeliness to graduate high school, superseding family income, SAT scores, even talent. Interestingly, she found grit is often inversely related to talent. That means talented people didn't have to try as hard to succeed and their lack of effort led to their failure. However, once less-talented students realize that failure—including their own—is not a permanent condition, they are much more likely to develop grit and persevere toward achievement. (To watch her 6-minute Ted Talk, scan the QR code).



Last Week, Joshua won a major victory against the kings to the south. Joshua credited his victories to God. In turn, the Lord used a person with grit to lead his people. This week, as Israel faced its greatest challenge yet, their victory would require faith and grit.

#### VICTORY REQUIRES GRIT

We might imagine the sinking feeling Joshua had standing, looking at the massive army set against him. *Their troops, a great horde, in number like the sand that is on the seashore (11:4).* Yet, ***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."***

Imagine how hard that promise might have been to believe if this were Joshua's first battle. However, Joshua had witnessed God work several times before. This was not his first test of victory or annihilation. Because God had been faithful, Joshua trusted that God would continue to deliver on his promises.

***Joshua took God at his word and all his warriors came suddenly against them by the waters of Merom and fell upon them. And the Lord gave them into the hand of Israel, who struck them and chased them. And they struck them until he left none remaining. And Joshua did to them just as the Lord said to him.***

Think about all the potential setbacks Israel could have faced since Joshua took charge. First, God's GPS busted when he told them to cross a raging, 150-foot-deep river. God worked it out. The entire male population had to get circumcised then they were asked to go walk around Jericho—if a coach suggested that minor, but sensitive, operation a couple weeks before two-a-days, the team would revolt! Israel was defeated at Ai and came back to win it. God delivered Israel himself from the southern coalition. Now, God turned every advantage on its head and Israel prevailed again.

Finally, after seven years of fighting, ***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.***

#### GRIT PASSIONATELY PERSEVERES

Finally, after 7 years of fighting, Joshua declared that the land had rest from war. This statement doesn't imply an end to *all* fighting. Indeed, Joshua himself announced the first of several such opportunities in just a few chapters. In fact, some fighting will continue long after Joshua's death. However, those minor skirmishes were fought by individuals or their clans. The work of the united army of Israel was over.

They had done it. They won—despite the numerous "Well, that's impossible" situations they encountered. At any point, it would have been so easy to quit.

Grit takes hard work and perseverance. Especially when you're not winning. Whether you feel like you're making progress or not, you may sometimes wonder if it's worth continuing. We all have those thoughts at one time or another. When those times come, consider this word to the Hebrews, "*You have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised*" (Hebrews 10:37).

Grit isn't glamorous. Grit requires a vision of what *could be* and *should be*. If the road were easy, it wouldn't take grit to get there. Grit is only required when the road is hard and everyone thinks you're a fool for continuing. However, when you have a vision of a better reality and how to make it so, the price tag is courage, fortitude, passion and perseverance—grit.

Everyone wants a championship, but few have what it takes to get there. The same is true spiritually. Everyone wants an easy faith, where we have Jesus without any demands on my life—life without life-change. Few understand Jesus' words when he said, "*If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me* (Matthew 16:24). Now, *that* takes grit!