

## Joshua 12:1-24

Chapter 12 concludes the second major section of the book of Joshua.

Cataloguing the conquered cities together in one place, Joshua once again gives us a view of the comprehensive nature of the conquest. Moses and Joshua conquered all of these kings because only one Sovereign, the Lord can reign over Israel.

### Summary

**Joshua 12:1-24 is a memorial account of the victories of Israel's great leaders, Moses and Joshua, as they defeated king after king to bring the light of God to a darkened land.**

#### **1. Victories under Moses vv. 1-6**

We begin with Israel's earlier victories under the leadership of Moses over kings who reigned east of the Jordan River.

After the general introduction, (**Josh 12:1**), the first king mentioned is Sihon, king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon (**Josh 12:2-3**). All of his land, which lay east of the Jordan River, corresponds roughly to central Palestine down to the mid-point of the Dead Sea. Today it lies within the borders of the country of Jordan. God gave Sihon and his people over to the Israelites (**Num. 21:24; Deut. 2:31-34**).

The Israelites then turned their attentions to Bashan and its king, Og, (**Josh 12:4-5**). When Og and all his people came out against Israel, they did to Og and his people as they had done to Sihon and his people. (**Num. 21:34-35**).

After he took the land of both Sihon and Og, Moses distributed it to Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh (**Josh 12:6**).

Israel's initial victories strengthened their confidence in God.

**First**, the former land of Sihon and Og became the location for Moses' greatest sermon (Deuteronomy). **Secondly**, Heshbon and Bashan became a kind of first fruits of a coming harvest. **Thirdly**, like all of the victories Israel experienced west of the Jordan, the defeat of Sihon and Og was a gracious gift of God (**Deut. 2:33, 36; 3:3**) and this Israel must remember (**Ps 135:5-12; 136:17-21**). When believers remember what Christ has achieved through His life and death, we are encouraged to believe that with him God will freely give us every other spiritual blessing as well (**Rom. 8:32**).

#### **2. Victories under Joshua vv. 7-24**

In verse 7, the theme of defeated kings continues but with a number of differences.

**First**, the text transitions from Moses to Joshua. **Secondly**, the geographical focus shifts from east of the Jordan River to the land that lies to the west.

**Thirdly**, the author supplies us with a list of thirty one kings (**Josh 12:24**).

Every ruler that stood up to oppose God's people had fallen.

#### **3. Israel's True King**

The settlement of Israel in the land was a testimony to God's supreme sovereignty. Moses and Joshua were God's appointed leaders over the people. They ruled over Israel under the Lord's direction. Nevertheless, the Lord was the king of his people. Immediately following the days of Joshua, however, the period of the Judges proved to be a cyclical series of spiritual disasters because there was no king to guide the nation in godliness. Though the first king, Saul, proved to be a spiritual disaster for the nation, his successor, David, was the man God had chosen and whose heart sought the ways of the Lord (**1 Sam. 13:14; 2 Sam. 23:3-4**).

God promised to raise up an heir for David, one to rule on his throne. (**2 Sam 7**).

#### 4. Jesus, King of Kings

Neither David nor Solomon reigned in perfect righteousness. The 'instruction for mankind' (**2 Sam. 7:19**) that God gave was of a perfect king: Jesus; the King of kings. The ministry of Jesus began with his preaching 'Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand' (**Matt. 3:2.; cf. Mark 1:14-15**). After Jesus announced the inauguration of the kingdom, we continue the theme of kingship in His temptation in the wilderness in which we see Him confront and overcome the prince of the power of the air.

Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus continued to display his kingly authority by proclaiming the word of God, healing the sick, and casting out demons.

The greatest display of his sovereignty, however, was his death on the cross (**Matt. 27:37; John 19:20**). On the cross, Jesus disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him (**Col 2:15**).

What Joshua did to the kings of Canaan (**Josh 12**), Christ did to the demonic powers. He disarmed them, put them to shame, and triumphed over them in the cross.

In the resurrection of Jesus, we see Christ's victory parade as he rejoiced in triumph over all his foes, having conquered sin, death and the evil one on the cross.

Joshua 12 anticipates the resurrection and exaltation of King Jesus.

Joshua 12 also points us further into the future of redemptive history.

With the fall of these kings, their kingdoms became the kingdom of the Lord.

The conquest of the Canaanite kings was a picture of the ultimate and final triumph of the kingdom of God (**Rev. 11:15**).

Why is Joshua 12 and its testimony to the kingship of Christ so important?

Because of what it means for Christ to be king. **First**, as we look to the day when Jesus returns, we should think about his kingship on a cosmic level (**Rom. 8:20-22; 1 Cor. 15:54-55**). **Secondly**, his kingship also exists on a very personal level. Whilst we await the return of Christ for the full consummation of his reign, he is already the risen king (**Acts. 2:29-32**), but do you acknowledge and submit to His kingship?

For the believer, Christ's kingship means means you live under the authority of his word. God is not a tyrant. Your king is also your loving, tender-hearted Savio (**Matt. 11:28-30**). The kingship of Christ over your life frees you to obey by grace and thus to follow the path of blessing. It frees you from building your own kingdom so that you can invest in the kingdom of God.