

## Fellowship Community Group Discussion Guide

Week of April 7

When Faithfulness Gets Harder | Joshua 11

**Opening Connection:** *Choose one question. Go around the room and ask each person to give their name and answer. The Discussion Leader is welcome to make up a question.*

- What's something interesting or noteworthy that happened to you over the Easter break?
- What's something challenging you accomplished that you are proud of?
- What's one insight you have gained from the Joshua series so far?

**Sermon Text and Content Question Ideas:** *Discuss the content of the text and ask your own follow-up questions as the discussion unfolds.*

- Open up to Joshua 11:1-9 Ask a volunteer to read it out loud.
- What are ways Joshua 11 is similar to and different than Joshua 10?
- Why would it be “crazy” for Israel to destroy the horses and chariots?

Read: Joshua 11:10-20

- Why is it significant that Joshua and Israel now have the Book of the Law that Moses wrote? Why would the author of Joshua want to remind the readers of this?
- In your own words, what is the summary of the story of Genesis-Deuteronomy? What is God doing?
- Why did God harden the hearts of the Canaanites? What should our response to that be?
- Why is it significant that Joshua had to fight for a long time?

Read: Joshua 11:21-23

- Why are the Anakim significant for the story of Israel taking the land?
- How do these verses demonstrate Joshua's faithfulness?
- The whole book of Joshua is summarized in Joshua 11:23, so why did the author (by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) write 24 chapters? What does this tell us?

**Discussion/Application Question Ideas:** *Focus now on applying the content of the message.*

- What are some examples of ways God calls us to be obedient that are “crazy” to our culture?
- What are some areas that are counter-cultural that you find it is hard to obey God in?
- What does it mean to root our lives in the “story-arc of the Bible”? How does doing that help us remain faithful in difficult times?
- What does it mean that Christ was devoted to the Lord for destruction on our behalf?
- In what ways have you persevered in your life with the Lord? What things are you currently having to persevere through?
- How can we encourage each other to persevere?

**Prayer Together**

- Ask for a volunteer to be the last person to pray, and have a time of prayer together, with a few different people praying.
- Pray for God's Word to bear fruit in your lives, in light of what you have discussed.

**Lead Pastor's Note:** Dear Community Group Leaders, I could foresee a situation where your Community Group discussion might turn to the topic of the Nephilim (Genesis 6:4), given their connection to the Anakim (Joshua 11:22) in Numbers 13:33. This really would be off topic from Joshua 11, so you are more than welcome to state that and steer the conversation back on track if the Nephilim come up. But I also wanted to give you a resource to help equip you to address it if needed. So here is a summary of my interpretation of Genesis 6:4 and the Nephilim. Certainly, there are other interpretations, but I have studied this passage in depth and this is the conclusion I personally have come to. Hopefully it will be helpful to you. Thanks for faithfully leading your Community Group! —Pastor Stephen

### ***Genesis 6:4 (ESV)***

*4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.*

- There are three distinct groups here, and grammatically they can't be the same: 1) the Nephilim, 2) the "sons of God," and 3) the offspring.
- Linguistically, "sons of God" most naturally refers to spiritual beings. This is how it is used in the other places in the Old Testament (cf. Job 1:6 and 2:1). I think is the correct interpretation here. Deviant spiritual beings took physical form and procreated (cf. Jude 6).
- The Nephilim, however, can't be the same as the "sons of God" because clearly the Nephilim were already present on earth "when the sons of God came into the daughters of men." The description of the Nephilim is not that they *are* "sons of God" but rather that they were already present at the time of these events.
- The Nephilim can't be the same as the offspring for the same reason. The text is clear that the Nephilim were already present when the consort takes place.

Who then are the mighty men in the second half of the verse? The mighty men are the Nephilim (and thus NOT the offspring of the "sons of God" and "the daughters of men"). This is somewhat obscure in English, but not at all in Hebrew. The noun "children" is NOT present in the Hebrew. It is the verb "to beget/to bear." To make it more natural in English the noun "children" is supplied. A more literal rendering would be: "The sons of God came into the daughters of mankind and procreated with them." So when the next clause begins with "these were the mighty men" it is impossible for the mighty men to be the offspring, because the word "children" isn't there. And if the "sons of God" are, in fact, spiritual beings then the only option left for the pronoun "these" to refer to is the Nephilim. Which is actually the most natural way for that clause to be expressed because "The Nephilim" is the subject of the verse.

- So the Nephilim are *mighty* men. The Hebrew word here (gibbôr) means: "manly, powerful, brave, valiant, vigorous, despot, hero." These were present then *and* afterward (cf. Numbers 13:33).
- The Nephilim are mighty *men*. These are powerful, valiant, leaders, but at the end of the day they are still just men. The Hebrew word 'îš (man) is present here. These are humans.
- If you read Genesis 6:1-7 the whole context of that passage is how God is grieved by the wickedness of *mankind* and that He will limit their days and bring judgement upon them. This means the point the passage is making is that the Nephilim are just human beings. They are not half-god, half man as many of the kings/giants of that time claimed to be.
- In Numbers 13:33 the sons of Anak are called Nephilim "Mighty men" because they are large people (Deuteronomy 2:10).