

The Gibeonite Deception (c. Summer 1406 BC)

Joshua 9

Summary Statement Concerning Southern and Northern Coalitions

1 Now it came about when all the kings who were beyond the Jordan, in the hill country and in the lowland and on all the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, heard of it, 2 that they gathered themselves together with one accord to fight with Joshua and with Israel.

Gibeon Decides to Save Itself Through Deception

3 When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, 4 they also acted craftily and set out as envoys, and took worn-out sacks on their donkeys, and wineskins worn-out and torn and mended, 5 and worn-out and patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry *and* had become crumbled. 6 They went to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, “We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us.” 7 The men of Israel said to the Hivites, “Perhaps you are living within our land; how then shall we make a covenant with you?” 8 But they said to Joshua, “We are your servants.” Then Joshua said to them, “Who are you and where do you come from?” 9 They said to him, “Your servants have come from a very far country because of the fame of the LORD your God; for we have heard the report of Him and all that He did in Egypt, 10 and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon and to Og king of Bashan who was at Ashtaroth. 11 So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, ‘Take provisions in your hand for the journey, and go to meet them and say to them, “We are your servants; now then, make a covenant with us.”’ 12 This our bread *was* warm *when* we took it for our provisions out of our houses on the day that we left to come to you; but now behold, it is dry and has become crumbled. 13 These wineskins which we filled were new, and behold, they are torn; and these our clothes and our sandals are worn out because of the very long journey.”

Joshua Did Not Ask Counsel From Yahweh

14 So the men *of Israel* took some of their provisions, and did not ask for the counsel of the LORD. 15 Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore *an oath* to them.

Gibeon’s Deception Discovered

16 It came about at the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were neighbors and that they were living within their land. 17 Then the sons of Israel set out and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities *were* Gibeon and Chephirah and Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim. 18 The sons of Israel did not strike them because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD the God of Israel. And the whole congregation grumbled against the leaders. 19 But all the leaders said to the whole congregation, “We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them. 20 This we will do to them, even let them live, so that wrath will not be upon us for the oath which we swore to them.” 21 The leaders said to them, “Let them live.” So they became hewers of wood and drawers of water for the whole congregation, just as the leaders had spoken to them.

Joshua Confronts the Gibeonites

22 Then Joshua called for them and spoke to them, saying, “Why have you deceived us, saying, ‘We are very far from you,’ when you are living within our land? 23 Now therefore, you are cursed, and you shall never cease being slaves, both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.” 24 So they answered Joshua and said, “Because it was certainly told your servants that the LORD your God had commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land before you; therefore we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. 25 Now behold, we are in your hands; do as it seems good and right in your sight to do to us.” 26 Thus he did to them, and delivered them from the hands of the sons of Israel, and they did not kill them. 27 But Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to this day, in the place which He would choose.

The Southern Campaign (c. Fall 1406 – 1400 BC)

Joshua 10

Reprisal Against Gibeon by the Five Kings of the Southern Coalition

1 Now it came about when Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had captured Ai, and had utterly destroyed it (just as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king), and that the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were within their land,

2 that he feared greatly, because Gibeon *was* a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men *were* mighty.

3 Therefore Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent *word* to Hoham king of Hebron and to Piram king of Jarmuth and to Japhia king of Lachish and to Debir king of Eglon, saying,

4 “Come up to me and help me, and let us attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the sons of Israel.”

5 So the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon, gathered together and went up, they with all their armies, and camped by Gibeon and fought against it.

6 Then the men of Gibeon sent *word* to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal, saying, “Do not abandon your servants; come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites that live in the hill country have assembled against us.”

Joshua Comes to Gibeon’s Rescue

7 So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him and all the valiant warriors.

8 The LORD said to Joshua, “Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands; not one of them shall stand before you.”

9 So Joshua came upon them suddenly by marching all night from Gilgal.

10 And the LORD confounded them before Israel, and He slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and pursued them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah.

The Pursuit

11 As they fled from before Israel, *while* they were at the descent of Beth-horon, the LORD threw large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died; *there were* more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword.

12 Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,

“O sun, stand still at Gibeon,
And O moon in the valley of Aijalon.”

13 So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped,
Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies.

Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and did not hasten to go *down* for about a whole day.

14 There was no day like that before it or after it, when the LORD listened to the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

Southern Coalition Kings Defeated

16 Now these five kings had fled and hidden themselves in the cave at Makkedah.

17 It was told Joshua, saying, “The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah.”

18 Joshua said, “Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and assign men by it to guard them,

19 but do not stay *there* yourselves; pursue your enemies and attack them in the rear. Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the LORD your God has delivered them into your hand.”

20 It came about when Joshua and the sons of Israel had finished slaying them with a very great slaughter, until they were destroyed, and the survivors *who* remained of them had entered the fortified cities,

21 that all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace. No one uttered a word against any of the sons of Israel.

22 Then Joshua said, “Open the mouth of the cave and bring these five kings out to me from the cave.”

23 They did so, and brought these five kings out to him from the cave: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon.

24 When they brought these kings out to Joshua, Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, “Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings.” So they came near and put their feet on their necks.

25 Joshua then said to them, “Do not fear or be dismayed! Be strong and courageous, for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies with whom you fight.”

26 So afterward Joshua struck them and put them to death, and he hanged them on five trees; and they hung on the trees until evening.

27 It came about at sunset that Joshua gave a command, and they took them down from the trees and threw them into the cave

where they had hidden themselves, and put large stones over the mouth of the cave, to this very day.

Destruction of the Seven Southern Cities

28 Now Joshua captured Makkedah on that day, and struck it and its king with the edge of the sword; he utterly destroyed it and every person who was in it. He left no survivor. Thus he did to the king of Makkedah just as he had done to the king of Jericho.

29 Then Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Makkedah to Libnah, and fought against Libnah.

30 The LORD gave it also with its king into the hands of Israel, and he struck it and every person who *was* in it with the edge of the sword. He left no survivor in it. Thus he did to its king just as he had done to the king of Jericho.

31 And Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Libnah to Lachish, and they camped by it and fought against it.

32 The LORD gave Lachish into the hands of Israel; and he captured it on the second day, and struck it and every person who *was* in it with the edge of the sword, according to all that he had done to Libnah.

33 Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish, and Joshua defeated him and his people until he had left him no survivor.

34 And Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Lachish to Eglon, and they camped by it and fought against it.

35 They captured it on that day and struck it with the edge of the sword; and he utterly destroyed that day every person who *was* in it, according to all that he had done to Lachish.

36 Then Joshua and all Israel with him went up from Eglon to Hebron, and they fought against it.

37 They captured it and struck it and its king and all its cities and all the persons who *were* in it with the edge of the sword. He left no survivor, according to all that he had done to Eglon. And he utterly destroyed it and every person who *was* in it.

38 Then Joshua and all Israel with him returned to Debir, and they fought against it.

39 He captured it and its king and all its cities, and they struck them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed every person *who was* in it. He left no survivor. Just as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir and its king, as he had also done to Libnah and its king.

Summary of Southern Campaign

40 Thus Joshua struck all the land, the hill country and the Negev and the lowland and the slopes and all their kings. He left no survivor, but he utterly destroyed all who breathed, just as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded.

41 Joshua struck them from Kadesh-barnea even as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen even as far as Gibeon.

42 Joshua captured all these kings and their lands at one time, because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for Israel.

43 [15] So Joshua and all Israel with him returned to the camp at Gilgal.

The Northern Campaign (c. Fall 1406 – 1400 BC)

Joshua 11:1–15

King Jabin's Mighty Northern Coalition

1 Then it came about, when Jabin king of Hazor heard *of it*, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon and to the king of Shimron and to the king of Achshaph,

2 and to the kings who were of the north in the hill country, and in the Arabah—south of Chinneroth and in the lowland and on the heights of Dor on the west—

3 to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Jebusite in the hill country, and the Hivite at the foot of Hermon in the land of Mizpeh.

4 They came out, they and all their armies with them, *as* many people as the sand that is on the seashore, with very many horses and chariots.

5 So all of these kings having agreed to meet, came and encamped together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.

The Battle of Merom

6 Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow at this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel; you shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire.”

7 So Joshua and all the people of war with him came upon them suddenly by the waters of Merom, and attacked them.

8 The LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, so that they defeated them, and pursued them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim and the valley of Mizpeh to the east; and they struck them until no survivor was left to them.

9 Joshua did to them as the LORD had told him; he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

Defeat of the Northern Coalition

10 Then Joshua turned back at that time, and captured Hazor and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor formerly was the head of all these kingdoms.

11 They struck every person who was in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying *them*; there was no one left who breathed. And he burned Hazor with fire.

12 Joshua captured all the cities of these kings, and all their kings, and he struck them with the edge of the sword, *and* utterly

destroyed them; just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded.

13 However, Israel did not burn any cities that stood on their mounds, except Hazor alone, *which* Joshua burned.

14 All the spoil of these cities and the cattle, the sons of Israel took as their plunder; but they struck every man with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them. They left no one who breathed.

15 Just as the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

Canaan is Conquered (c. Fall 1406 – 1400 BC)

Joshua 11:16–12:24

Summary of the Conquest

11:16 Thus Joshua took all that land: the hill country and all the Negev, all that land of Goshen, the lowland, the Arabah, the hill country of Israel and its lowland

17 from Mount Halak, that rises toward Seir, even as far as Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon at the foot of Mount Hermon. And he captured all their kings and struck them down and put them to death.

18 Joshua waged war a long time with all these kings. [cf. [Exod 23:29](#)]

19 There was not a city which made peace with the sons of Israel except the Hivites living in Gibeon; they took them all in battle.

20 For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, to meet Israel in battle in order that he might utterly destroy them, that they might receive no mercy, but that he might destroy them, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

21 Then Joshua came at that time and cut off the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab and from all the hill country of Judah and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities.

22 There were no Anakim left in the land of the sons of Israel; only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod some remained.

23 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 divisions by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war.

Defeated Kings and Territories East of the Jordan

12:1 Now these are the kings of the land whom the sons of Israel defeated, and whose land they possessed beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise, from the valley of the Arnon as far as Mount Hermon, and all the Arabah to the east:

2 Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, *and* ruled from Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, both the middle of the valley and half of Gilead, even as far as the brook Jabbok, the border of the sons of Ammon;

3 and the Arabah as far as the Sea of Chinneroth toward the east, and as far as the sea of the Arabah, *even* the Salt Sea, eastward toward Beth-jeshimoth, and on the south, at the foot of the slopes of Pisgah;

4 and the territory of Og king of Bashan, one of the remnant of Rephaim, who lived at Ashtaroth and at Edrei,

5 and ruled over Mount Hermon and Salecah and all Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and half of Gilead, *as far as* the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.

6 Moses the servant of the LORD and the sons of Israel defeated them; and Moses the servant of the LORD gave it to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh as a possession.

Defeated Kings and Cities West of the Jordan

7 Now these are the kings of the land whom Joshua and the sons of Israel defeated beyond the Jordan toward the west, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon even as far as Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir; and Joshua gave it to the tribes of Israel as a possession according to their divisions,

8 in the hill country, in the lowland, in the Arabah, on the slopes, and in the wilderness, and in the Negev; the Hittite, the Amorite and the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite:

9 the king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one;

10 the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one;

11 the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one;

12 the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one;

13 the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one;

14 the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one;

15 the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one;

16 the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one;

17 the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hepher, one;

18 the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one;

19 the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one;

20 the king of Shimron-meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one;

21 the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one;

22 the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam in Carmel, one;

23 the king of Dor in the heights of Dor, one; the king of Goiim in Gilgal, one;
24 the king of Tirzah, one: in all, thirty-one kings.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) Joshua 10:15 is out of place chronologically. It is scarcely possible or logical that Joshua would have interrupted the completion of the battle's business near Gibeon and the other cities (including Makkedah: v. 10) and marched the entire congregation many miles back to their base camp at Gilgal, only to return to Makkedah and conclude the business of dealing with the Amorite coalition (vv. 16–27). The anomaly of v. 15's position is magnified when we realize that the words of this verse are found—intact and verbatim—in v. 43, where they make much more sense. Four solutions present themselves. First, those who see the *Book of Jashar* quote extending through v. 15 have little problem here, since this verse was thus part of that source, incorporated wholesale into the Book of Joshua. These scholars see v. 15 functioning proleptically, anticipating the end of the matter that comes in v. 43. In the *Book of Jashar*, the account would have omitted the details of the city-by-city conquests of vv. 16–42 and just concluded with the statement of v. 15/v. 43, which occurred just once in that book. Second, both verses could have been included intentionally, each closing off a section of the narrative. Third, other scholars see v. 15 as a scribal duplication (i.e., a transmission error), since the ends of vv. 14 and 42 are similar in Hebrew. Thus, only v. 43 should be seen as original. Fourth, the Old Greek omits both vv. 15 and 43, which may indicate that neither verse was present in the original text. Of these four possibilities, the second or third appears to be the most plausible.¹

¹ David M. Howard, Jr., "Joshua," *NAC*, 251.