

The Gibeonite Deception (c. Summer 1406 BC)

Joshua 9

Summary Statement Concerning Southern and Northern Coalitions

1 When the news reached all the kings on the west side of the Jordan—in the hill country, the lowlands, and all along the Mediterranean coast as far as Lebanon (including the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites)—
2 they formed an alliance to fight against Joshua and Israel.

Gibeon Decides to Save Itself Through Deception

3 When the residents of Gibeon heard what Joshua did to Jericho and Ai,
4 they did something clever. They collected some provisions and put worn-out sacks on their donkeys, along with worn-out wineskins that were ripped and patched.
5 They had worn-out, patched sandals on their feet and dressed in worn-out clothes. All their bread was dry and hard.
6 They came to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal and said to him and the men of Israel, “We have come from a distant land. Make a treaty with us.”
7 The men of Israel said to the Hivites, “Perhaps you live near us. So how can we make a treaty with you?”
8 But they said to Joshua, “We are willing to be your subjects.” So Joshua said to them, “Who are you and where do you come from?”
9 They told him, “Your subjects have come from a very distant land because of the reputation of the LORD your God, for we have heard the news about all he did in Egypt
10 and all he did to the two Amorite kings on the other side of the Jordan—King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan in Ashtaroth.
11 Our leaders and all who live in our land told us, ‘Take provisions for your journey and go meet them. Tell them, “We are willing to be your subjects. Make a treaty with us.”’
12 This bread of ours was warm when we packed it in our homes the day we started out to meet you, but now it is dry and hard.
13 These wineskins we filled were brand new, but look how they have ripped. Our clothes and sandals have worn out because it has been a very long journey.”

Joshua Did Not Ask Counsel From Yahweh

14 The men examined some of their provisions, but they failed to ask the LORD’s advice.
15 Joshua made a peace treaty with them and agreed to let them live. The leaders of the community sealed it with an oath.

Gibeon’s Deception Discovered

16 Three days after they made the treaty with them, the Israelites found out they were from the local area and lived nearby.
17 So the Israelites set out and on the third day arrived at their cities—Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath Jearim.
18 The Israelites did not attack them because the leaders of the community had sworn an oath to them in the name of the LORD God of Israel. The whole community criticized the leaders,
19 but all the leaders told the whole community, “We swore an oath to them in the name of the LORD God of Israel. So now we can’t hurt them!
20 We must let them live so we can escape the curse attached to the oath we swore to them.”
21 The leaders then added, “Let them live.” So they became woodcutters and water carriers for the whole community, as the leaders had decided.

Joshua Confronts the Gibeonites

22 Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said to them, “Why did you trick us by saying, ‘We live far away from you,’ when you really live nearby?
23 Now you are condemned to perpetual servitude as woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God.”
24 They said to Joshua, “It was carefully reported to your subjects how the LORD your God commanded Moses his servant to assign you the whole land and to destroy all who live in the land from before you. Because of you we were terrified we would lose our lives, so we did this thing.
25 So now we are in your power. Do to us what you think is good and appropriate.
26 Joshua did as they said; he kept the Israelites from killing them
27 and that day made them woodcutters and water carriers for the community and for the altar of the LORD at the divinely chosen site. (They continue in that capacity to this very day.)

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

Joshua 10

Reprisal Against Gibeon by the Five Kings of the Southern Coalition

1 Adoni-Zedek, king of Jerusalem, heard how Joshua captured Ai and annihilated it and its king as he did Jericho and its king. He also heard how the people of Gibeon made peace with Israel and lived among them.

2 All Jerusalem was terrified because Gibeon was a large city, like one of the royal cities. It was larger than Ai and all its men were warriors.

3 So King Adoni-Zedek of Jerusalem sent this message to King Hoham of Hebron, King Piram of Jarmuth, King Japhia of Lachish, and King Debir of Eglon:

4 “Come to my aid so we can attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and the Israelites.”

5 So the five Amorite kings (the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon) and all their troops gathered together and advanced. They deployed their troops and fought against Gibeon.

6 The men of Gibeon sent this message to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal, “Do not abandon your subjects! Rescue us! Help us! For all the Amorite kings living in the hill country are attacking us.”

Joshua Comes to Gibeon’s Rescue

7 So Joshua and his whole army, including the bravest warriors, marched up from Gilgal.

8 The LORD told Joshua, “Don’t be afraid of them, for I am handing them over to you. Not one of them can resist you.”

9 Joshua attacked them by surprise after marching all night from Gilgal.

10 The LORD routed them before Israel. Israel thoroughly defeated them at Gibeon. They chased them up the road to the pass of Beth Horon and struck them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah.

The Pursuit

11 As they fled from Israel on the slope leading down from Beth Horon, the LORD threw down on them large hailstones from the sky, all the way to Azekah. They died—in fact, more died from the hailstones than the Israelites killed with the sword.

12 The day the LORD delivered the Amorites over to the Israelites, Joshua prayed to the LORD before Israel:

“O sun, stand still over Gibeon!
O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon!”

13 The sun stood still and the moon stood motionless while the nation took vengeance on its enemies. The event is recorded in the Scroll of the Upright One. The sun stood motionless in the middle of the sky and did not set for about a full day.

14 There has not been a day like it before or since. The LORD obeyed a man, for the LORD fought for Israel!

Southern Coalition Kings Defeated

16 The five Amorite kings ran away and hid in the cave at Makkedah.

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

18 Joshua said, “Roll large stones over the mouth of the cave and post guards in front of it.

19 But don’t you delay! Chase your enemies and catch them! Don’t allow them to retreat to their cities, for the LORD your God is handing them over to you.”

20 Joshua and the Israelites almost totally wiped them out, but some survivors did escape to the fortified cities.

21 Then the whole army safely returned to Joshua at the camp in Makkedah. No one dared threaten the Israelites.

22 Joshua said, “Open the cave’s mouth and bring the five kings out of the cave to me.”

23 They did as ordered; they brought the five kings out of the cave to him—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon.

24 When they brought the kings out to Joshua, he summoned all the men of Israel and said to the commanders of the troops who accompanied him, “Come here and put your feet on the necks of these kings.” So they came up and put their feet on their necks.

25 Then Joshua said to them, “Don’t be afraid and don’t panic! Be strong and brave, for the LORD will do the same thing to all your enemies you fight.

26 Then Joshua executed them and hung them on five trees. They were left hanging on the trees until evening.

27 At sunset Joshua ordered his men to take them down from the trees. They threw them into the cave where they had hidden and piled large stones over the mouth of the cave. (They remain to this very day.)

Destruction of the Seven Southern Cities

28 That day Joshua captured Makkedah and put the sword to it and its king. He annihilated everyone who lived in it; he left no survivors. He did to its king what he had done to the king of Jericho.

29 Joshua and all Israel marched from Makkedah to Libnah and fought against it.

30 The LORD handed it and its king over to Israel, and Israel put the sword to all who lived there; they left no survivors. They did to its

king what they had done to the king of Jericho.

31 Joshua and all Israel marched from Libnah to Lachish. He deployed his troops and fought against it.

32 The LORD handed Lachish over to Israel and they captured it on the second day. They put the sword to all who lived there, just as they had done to Libnah.

33 Then King Horam of Gezer came up to help Lachish, but Joshua struck down him and his army until no survivors remained.

34 Joshua and all Israel marched from Lachish to Eglon. They deployed troops and fought against it.

35 That day they captured it and put the sword to all who lived there. That day they annihilated it just as they had done to Lachish.

36 Joshua and all Israel marched up from Eglon to Hebron and fought against it.

37 They captured it and put the sword to its king, all its surrounding cities, and all who lived in it; they left no survivors. As they had done at Eglon, they annihilated it and all who lived there.

38 Joshua and all Israel turned to Debir and fought against it.

39 They captured it, its king, and all its surrounding cities and put the sword to them. They annihilated everyone who lived there; they left no survivors. They did to Debir and its king what they had done to Libnah and its king and to Hebron.

Summary of Southern Campaign

40 Joshua defeated the whole land, including the hill country, the Negev, the lowlands, the slopes, and all their kings. He left no survivors. He annihilated everything that breathed, just as the LORD God of Israel had commanded.

41 Joshua conquered the area between Kadesh Barnea and Gaza and the whole region of Goshen, all the way to Gibeon.

42 Joshua captured in one campaign all these kings and their lands, for the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.

43 [15] Then Joshua and all Israel 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 When King Jabin of Hazor heard the news, he organized a coalition, including King Jobab of Madon, the king of Shimron, the king of Acshaph,

2 and the northern kings who ruled in the hill country, the Arabah south of Kinnereth, the lowlands, and the heights of Dor to the west.

3 Canaanites came from the east and west; Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, and Jebusites from the hill country; and Hivites from below Hermon in the area of Mizpah.

4 These kings came out with their armies; they were as numerous as the sand on the seashore and had a large number of horses and chariots.

5 All these kings gathered and joined forces at the Waters of Merom to fight Israel.

The Battle of Merom

6 The LORD told Joshua, "Don't be afraid of them, for about this time tomorrow I will cause all of them to lie dead before Israel. You must hamstring their horses and burn their chariots."

7 Joshua and his whole army caught them by surprise at the Waters of Merom and attacked them.

8 The LORD handed them over to Israel and they struck them down and chased them all the way to Greater Sidon, Misrephoth Maim, and the Mizpah Valley to the east. They struck them down until no survivors remained.

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

Defeat of the Northern Coalition

10 At that time Joshua turned, captured Hazor, and struck down its king with the sword, for Hazor was at that time the leader of all these kingdoms.

11 They annihilated everyone who lived there with the sword—no one who breathed remained—and burned Hazor.

12 Joshua captured all these royal cities and all their kings and annihilated them with the sword, as Moses the LORD's servant had commanded.

13 But Israel did not burn any of the cities located on mounds, except for Hazor; it was the only one Joshua burned.

14 The Israelites plundered all the goods of these cities and the cattle, but they totally destroyed all the people and allowed no one who breathed to live.

15 Moses the LORD's servant passed on the LORD's commands to Joshua, and Joshua did as he was told. He did not ignore any of the commands the LORD had given Moses.

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

Joshua 11:16–12:24

Summary of the Conquest

11:16 Joshua conquered the whole land, including the hill country, all the Negev, all the land of Goshen, the lowlands, the Arabah, the hill country of Israel and its lowlands,
 17 from Mount Halak on up to Seir, as far as Baal Gad in the Lebanon Valley below Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings and executed them.
 18 Joshua campaigned against these kings for quite some time. [cf. [Exod 23:29](#)]
 19 No city made peace with the Israelites (except the Hivites living in Gibeon); they had to conquer all of them,
 20 for the LORD determined to make them obstinate so they would attack Israel. He wanted Israel to annihilate them without mercy, as he had instructed Moses.
 21 At that time Joshua attacked and eliminated the Anakites from the hill country—from Hebron, Debir, Anab, and all the hill country of Judah and Israel. Joshua annihilated them and their cities.
 22 No Anakites were left in Israelite territory, though some remained in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.
 23 Joshua conquered the whole land, just as the LORD had promised Moses, and he assigned Israel their tribal portions. Then the land was free of war.

Defeated Kings and Territories East of the Jordan

12:1 Now these are the kings of the land whom the Israelites defeated and drove from their land on the east side of the Jordan, from the Arnon Valley to Mount Hermon, including all the eastern Arabah:
 2 King Sihon of the Amorites who lived in Heshbon and ruled from Aroer (on the edge of the Arnon Valley)—including the city in the middle of the valley and half of Gilead—all the way to the Jabbok Valley bordering Ammonite territory.
 3 His kingdom included the eastern Arabah from the Sea of Kinnereth to the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea), including the route to Beth Jeshimoth and the area southward below the slopes of Pisgah.
 4 The territory of King Og of Bashan, one of the few remaining Rephaites, who lived in Ashtaroth and Edrei
 5 and ruled over Mount Hermon, Salecah, all of Bashan to the border of the Geshurites and Maacathites, and half of Gilead as far as the border of King Sihon of Heshbon.
 6 Moses the LORD's servant and the Israelites defeated them and Moses the LORD's servant assigned their land to Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

Defeated Kings and Cities West of the Jordan

7 These are the kings of the land whom Joshua and the Israelites defeated on the west side of the Jordan, from Baal Gad in the Lebanon Valley to Mount Halak on up to Seir. Joshua assigned this territory to the Israelite tribes,
 8 including the hill country, the lowlands, the Arabah, the slopes, the wilderness, and the Negev—the land of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites:
 9 the king of Jericho (one), the king of Ai—located near 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 Hopher (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 Acshaph (one),
 21 the king of Taanach (one), the king of Megiddo (one),
 22 the king of Kedesh (one), the king of Jokneam near Carmel (one),
 23 the king of Dor—near Naphath Dor—(one), the king of Goyim—near Gilgal—(one),
 24 the king of Tirzah (one), a total of 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 LXX 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.