

Joshua 10:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now it came to pass, when Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them;

Analysis

Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them; That he feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty.

Adoni-zedek's name (אֲדֹנִי־צֶדֶק, "lord of righteousness" or "my lord is righteous") ironically echoes Melchizedek ("king of righteousness"), the righteous priest-king of Salem who blessed Abraham centuries earlier (Genesis 14:18-20). Salem became Jerusalem, meaning this Canaanite king occupied the same throne Melchizedek once held. The contrast is striking: Melchizedek worshiped El Elyon (God Most High) and blessed Abraham; Adoni-zedek worshiped Canaanite deities and opposed Abraham's descendants. This typological connection suggests Jerusalem's significance as the future city of David and ultimately of Christ, the eternal priest-king after Melchizedek's order (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7:1-17).

The king "feared greatly" (vayira me'od, וַיִּירָא מְאֹד) because of strategic realities: Gibeon was a major city-state whose defection to Israel created a dangerous pro-

Israel enclave in the heart of Canaanite territory. The description "as one of the royal cities" indicates Gibeon was a powerful city-state despite lacking a king (it was governed by elders, 9:11), and its warriors were formidable. The Gibeonite treaty broke Canaanite unity and created a domino effect—if Gibeon could obtain terms with Israel, other cities might follow.

From a Reformed perspective, this account demonstrates how God's purposes advance even through imperfect human actions. The Gibeonites' deception, though wrong, achieved divine ends—their treaty forced the southern Canaanite coalition into premature battle, allowing Joshua to defeat multiple kings simultaneously. God's sovereignty ordains both ends and means, using even human sin to accomplish His redemptive purposes (Genesis 50:20; Acts 2:23).

Historical Context

Jerusalem in Joshua's time (c. 1400 BCE, early date) was a Jebusite fortress city, smaller than its later Davidic expansion but strategically located on a ridge between the Kidron and Tyropoeon valleys. Archaeological excavations on the Ophel (City of David) reveal Late Bronze Age fortifications including massive stone walls. The Amarna Letters (14th century BCE Egyptian diplomatic correspondence) mention Jerusalem (Urusalim) and its king Abdi-Heba, confirming the city's political significance in this period.

The name "Jerusalem" (יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, Yerushalayim) possibly means "foundation of peace" or "possession of peace," though etymology remains debated. The city's conquest would not occur until David's reign (2 Samuel 5:6-9), over 400 years after Joshua. This delay fulfills God's promise to give Canaan gradually (Exodus 23:29-30), and the Jebusites' continued presence in Jerusalem (Joshua 15:63) testified to incomplete conquest requiring future generations to complete.

The coalition Adoni-zedek formed included the kings of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon—major Shephelah cities controlling access routes between the coast and hill country. Archaeological evidence shows destructions at several of these sites during the Late Bronze Age, though precise dating and attribution remain

debated. The coalition's strategic objective was to punish Gibeon for betrayal and eliminate Israel's foothold in the central hill country before it could expand.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the contrast between Melchizedek and Adoni-zedek illustrate the difference between true righteousness and nominal religion?
2. What does Adoni-zedek's fear of Gibeon's defection teach about the spiritual "domino effect" when people align themselves with God's purposes?
3. How does God's use of the Gibeonite treaty (obtained through deception) demonstrate His sovereignty in accomplishing good through imperfect human actions?

Interlinear Text

וַיְהִי	כַּשֵּׁם עַ	אֲדֹנִי	צִדְקָה	וּלְמֶלֶךְ הָ	
H1961	had heard	H0	Now it came to pass when Adonizedek	and her king	
	H8085		H139	H4428	
וַיְהִי	וְכִי	לָכֵן	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	לָעַי	וַיְהָרִימָהּ
of Jerusalem	how	had taken	Joshua	H853	Ai and had utterly destroyed
H3389	H3588	H3920	H3091	H5857	H2763
כַּאֲשֶׁר	עָשָׂה	לִירִיחוֹ	וּלְמֶלֶךְ הָ	כֵּן	עָשָׂה
H834	it as he had done	to Jericho	and her king	H3651	it as he had done
	H6213	H3405	H4428		H6213
וַיְהִי	וּלְמֶלֶךְ הָ	וְכִי	הָשֵׁל יָמָו	וַיֵּשְׁבֵי	גִבְעוֹן
Ai	and her king	how	had made peace	and how the inhabitants	of Gibeon
H5857	H4428	H3588	H7999	H3427	H1391
אֶת	וַיִּשְׁכְּאוּ	וְהָיוּ	בְּקִרְבָּם:		
H854	with Israel	H1961	and were among		
	H3478		H7130		