

Joshua 10:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon.

Analysis

And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon.

The obedient response "they did so" (וַיַּעֲשׂוּ-כֵן, vaya'asu-chen) demonstrates Israel's continued submission to Joshua's authority. The repetition of the command's execution reinforces the narrative's solemnity—this isn't incidental detail but pivotal historical moment. The phrase "brought forth... out of the cave" reverses their earlier hiding (v. 16), with the passive voice suggesting the kings were dragged out, likely bound and humiliated.

The formal listing of the five kings by their cities emphasizes the comprehensive nature of the southern coalition's defeat. Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon represented the dominant city-states controlling southern Canaan's strategic centers. Jerusalem (יְרוּשָׁלָם, Yerushalayim) controlled the central hill country; Hebron (חֶבְרוֹן, Chevron), 19 miles south, was a major cultic center; Jarmuth (יָרְמוֹת, Yarmut) guarded western approaches; Lachish (לָכִישׁ, Lachish) was the region's premier fortress; Eglon (עֲגָלוֹן, Eglon) controlled southwestern routes. Together, these cities formed an interlocking defensive network.

From a redemptive-historical perspective, this list prophetically points to Christ's ultimate victory. These kings who opposed God's purposes and persecuted His

people prefigure all who resist Christ's kingdom. Their capture and coming execution (vv. 26-27) foreshadow Revelation 19:19-21, where kings gathered against the Lamb are defeated and judged. God's purposes cannot be thwarted; those who oppose Him ensure their own destruction (Psalm 2:1-12).

Historical Context

Archaeological and historical evidence illuminates each city's significance. Jerusalem (ancient Jebus) sat on a defensible ridge with springs, making it naturally strong. Excavations on the Ophel (City of David) reveal Late Bronze Age fortifications. Hebron, associated with Abraham (Genesis 13:18; 23:2, 19), was rebuilt by Pharaoh and assigned to Caleb (Joshua 14:13-14). Its ancient name was Kiriath-arba ("city of four"), possibly referring to four hills or four ancestral giants (Joshua 14:15).

Jarmuth (modern Khirbet Yarmuk) guarded the Wadi es-Sunt approach to the hill country. Archaeological surveys confirm Late Bronze Age occupation. Lachish (Tell ed-Duweir) was Judah's second most important city after Jerusalem, featuring massive fortifications including walls, glacis, and elaborate gate systems. Excavations revealed destruction layers from Joshua's period, though precise dating remains debated. The Lachish Letters (6th century BCE) later illustrated the city's continued strategic importance.

Eglon's precise location remains uncertain (possibly Tell Eton or Tell el-Hesi), though textual and archaeological evidence places it in the Shephelah. Together, these five cities controlled the approaches to the Judean hill country from the Shephelah and coastal plain. Their simultaneous neutralization opened southern Canaan to rapid Israelite conquest, as subsequent verses detail (vv. 28-39).

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the specific naming of these five kings and cities demonstrate God's concern with concrete historical realities rather than abstract spiritual concepts?
2. What does the defeat of this formidable coalition teach about the futility of human alliances formed in opposition to God's purposes?
3. How should believers today respond when facing seemingly overwhelming opposition from multiple sources simultaneously?

Interlinear Text

מַלְךָ	מֶלֶךְ	אֶת	שָׁתֶם	מֶלֶךְ	וְעֶשֶׂר
and the king	and the king	those five	and the king	and the king	and the king
H4428	H3389	H2568	H4428	H3389	H853
לְהַבְאֵר	מִצְרָיִם	מִצְרָיִם	לְהַבְאֵר	מִצְרָיִם	לְהַבְאֵר
unto him	out of the cave	unto him	out of the cave	out of the cave	out of the cave
H4428	H4631	H4428	H4631	H4428	H4631
מֶלֶךְ	מֶלֶךְ	מֶלֶךְ	מֶלֶךְ	מֶלֶךְ	מֶלֶךְ
and the king	and the king	and the king	and the king	and the king	and the king
H4428	H2275	H4428	H3412	H4428	H853
לְכַדְמָיו	לְכַדְמָיו	לְכַדְמָיו	לְכַדְמָיו	לְכַדְמָיו	לְכַדְמָיו
of Lachish	and the king	of Eglon	of Jarmuth	of Jarmuth	of Hebron
H3923	H853	H4428	H3412	H853	H4428

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