

# Joshua 12:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Beth-el, one;

## Analysis

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**The king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Beth-el, one**—The catalog begins with Israel's first two conquests, emphasizing chronological and theological priority. Jericho fell by miraculous intervention (Joshua 6), demonstrating that YHWH fights for Israel. Ai (ha-Ai, 'עַי, 'the ruin') initially defeated Israel due to Achan's sin (Joshua 7), then fell after covenant purification (Joshua 8)—showing that divine presence, not military superiority, determines victory.

The repetition of echad (אֶחָד, 'one') after each king creates a drumbeat of triumph throughout the chapter. These weren't random skirmishes but systematic dismantling of Canaanite power structures. The Hebrew word order places melek (king) first for emphasis: 'King of Jericho—one!' Each 'one' is a trophy of grace.

## Historical Context

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Jericho (Tel es-Sultan) is one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited sites, with massive walls and towers dating to 8000 BC. The Late Bronze Age city Joshua conquered (ca. 1400 BC) left controversial archaeological evidence—Kathleen Kenyon found minimal LB remains, while earlier excavations by Garstang found destruction layers. Ai (et-Tell) presents similar archaeological challenges. These debates don't negate the historical narrative but illustrate interpretive complexity.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. How does Jericho's supernatural fall followed by Ai's natural battle teach that God uses both miraculous intervention and ordinary means to accomplish His purposes?
2. What does Ai's name ('the ruin') suggest about confronting enemies while harboring unconfessed sin in your life?
3. Why might it be significant that Scripture counts each defeated king individually rather than giving a summary number?

## Interlinear Text

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מֶלֶךְ	יְרִיחוֹ	אֶחָד:	מֶלֶךְ	הַעֵי	אֲשֶׁר	מֵצֵד	בֵּית
<b>The king</b>	<b>of Jericho</b>	<b>one</b>	<b>The king</b>	<b>of Ai</b>	H834	<b>which is beside</b>	H0
H4428	H3405	H259	H4428	H5857		H6654	

אֶחָד:	לְ
<b>Bethel</b>	<b>one</b>
H1008	H259