

The Conquest of Southern Canaan

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – The Israelites complete the destruction of the forces of the five Amorite kings in the south
2. aim – To cause us to proclaim the gospel as both the message of hope and the message of judgment
3. passage – Joshua 10:16-43

b. outline

1. The Execution of the Amorite Kings (Joshua 10:16-28)
2. The Destruction of the Amorite Cities (Joshua 10:29-43)
3. The Importance of the Amorite Conquest (Joshua 10:24-25)

c. opening

1. the **structure** of this chapter
 - a. **IMO**: the chapter contains two (2) pericopes, based on a certain interpretation of **v. 15**
 1. the first pericope (**vv. 1-15**) is designed to describe the destruction of the Amorite alliance of kings and city-states *repeated* from **9:1-2** in **10:1-5** – it focuses on **the actions of God**
 2. the second pericope (**vv. 16-43**) is a **flashback** of events that occur within the “white space” between **10:14** and **10:15** – it focuses on **the actions of the Israelites under God’s lead**
 - a. **i.e.** like **Genesis 2** (a flashback of the specific formation of man and woman *quickly outlined* in **Genesis 1**); like **chap. 2** (a flashback of events sandwiched in **chap. 1**)
 - b. **IOW**: the second pericope describes *the details* of what is only *implied* about how the Amorites were “finished off” *after* God had rained down hailstones on them (**i.e.** the **very long day**)
 1. **v. 15** is identical to **v. 43** – the return to camp at Gilgal is *repeated* – **i.e.** the end stated *again*
 2. and, the author says that all of this happened “*at one time*” (**v. 42**)
 3. so, the conquest of **vv. 29-43** is the *culmination* of this long day as some of the Amorite soldiers “escape” back to their home cities (note the “*remnant*” in **v. 20** vs. “*wiped out*”)

I. The Execution of the Amorite Kings (Joshua 10:16-28)

Content

a. the Amorite kings flee to Makkedah (vv. 16-17)

1. (**again**) the five kings (“*these*”, **v. 16**) are those listed in **10:1-5**, led by Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem
 - a. **i.e.** when the panic of God comes upon the Amorites, they flee *with their troops* to the S
2. a brief geography lesson to begin (**see map below**):
 - a. Jericho and Gilgal are located just W of the Jordan, ~10 miles N of the Dead Sea
 1. **note**: Gilgal is where the Israelites are encamped (**i.e.** *probably* where the women and children are staying while the fighting men go out to attack the cities; **note v. 7**)
 2. Ai and Bethel are W of Gilgal; Gibeon is to the SW of Ai
 - b. Jerusalem is about 5 miles SE of Gibeon, in from the Dead Sea about 15 miles – it marks the “top” of S Canaan – the rest of the locations mentioned in the chapter are to the SW of Jerusalem
 1. **i.e.** this is the (eventual) territory of Judah, including the Negev wilderness (**v. 40**)
 2. **IOW**: Adoni-zedek makes an alliance with four (4) kings to his SW; this *probably* indicates that he “controls” this area of Canaan and the city-states “below” him
 - c. Makkedah (ma-kay-dah) is located at the S end of the “*hill country*” (**v. 40**) in the center E-W of Canaan between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean
 1. Azekah is located at the edge of the hill country to its W, along the way that the fleeing soldiers would have taken S (**i.e.** in the valley to the W; easier ground to travel than the hills)
 2. it is *around* Azekah that God kills *most* of the Amorite soldiers with hailstones (**see 10:11**)
3. the five kings hide themselves from Joshua’s forces in the caves near Makkedah
 - a. **i.e.** the kings flee *here* because there are many places to hide in this high wilderness country
 1. what’s left of their forces are “on the run” and it is only a matter of time before they are defeated
 - b. (**again**) these kings *actually believe* they can hide from the “god” of the Israelites
 1. as the reprobate, they suppress their understanding of God’s **omniscience** – they actually believe they can escape the *sure judgment of God* if they hide in a cave (**Revelation 6:15-17**)

[The sixth seal of judgment is opened] Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?’

2. **principle: there is nothing around us that can protect us from the fierce wrath of God when it finally falls in judgment – only Christ Jesus can protect us with his propitiation**
- c. but ... the location of the kings is revealed (v. 17)
 1. **question:** is it *possible* that a messenger of God [an angel; remember 10:10] reveals this to someone in the Israelite army, who then relays that information to Joshua?
 - a. **in the end, everything will be revealed ...**
 2. Joshua orders the caves to be sealed up (no escape) because he is chasing down the Amorite forces heading S – once that is done, he can then go back to deal with the kings in the cave
- b. the Amorite kings are executed (vv. 18-27)**
 1. once Joshua has chased a “remnant” (v. 20) of the Amorite forces into the fortified cities to the S (see below), he and his men return to Makkedah to deal with the kings
 - a. **IOW:** Joshua “wiped out” most of the rest of the soldiers, but a few escape into their home cities
 - b. **note:** the defeat was so decisive (under Yahweh), no one dared “move his tongue” (v. 21b) = no one questioned what needed to be done to these kings as the *reprobates* [cowards] they are
 2. so, Joshua has these kings brought out (vv. 22-27)
 - a. he instructs the “chiefs of the men of war” (i.e. the military leaders) to put their feet on their necks
 1. it is a message ... (see Section III below)
 - b. he executes them and hangs them on five trees (until evening, per the law; Deut. 21:22f; e.g. Ai)
 1. when the sun (eventually) goes down, he has their bodies thrown into the cave and sealed up
- c. the inhabitants of Makkedah are destroyed (v. 28)**
 1. Makkedah is the **second city** (see below) attacked by Joshua as the Amorite forces flee to the S
 - a. it is not a part of the alliance above, but it is a Canaanite city, and part of the overall judgment
 - b. unlike Jericho and Ai, the city is *not destroyed* – only its *inhabitants* are killed
 1. (again) the city *now* becomes the property of the Israelites, just like the spoils of Ai did
 2. **IMO:** all of the events of vv. 16-43 are a part of the **very long day** that God granted in 10:13
 - a. on the “second day” at Lachish (v. 32) supports the idea that these events occurred **very quickly**
 - b. so, the “second day” is simply “crossing over” into the next *calendar day* (i.e. at midnight), although the sun was still above the horizon

II. The Destruction of the Amorite Cities (Joshua 10:29-43)

Content

a. the conquest of southern Canaan

1. (again) a brief geography lesson (see map below):
 - a. the cities of Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir are clustered around Makkedah
 - b. Jarmuth (in the alliance) is N of this cluster, and no mention is made of this city being attacked
 1. however, it is *likely* that Jarmuth *is* the **first target** in the *general comments* of vv. 19b-20
 2. i.e. on the way S towards Makkedah as the armies of the alliance are fleeing that way
2. **third city:** Israel moves from Makkedah to Libnah (vv. 29-30)
 - a. Libnah and Debir are not in the alliance, but they are (like Makkedah) Canaanite cities *probably* affiliated with Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem
3. **fourth city:** Israel moves from Libnah to Lachish (vv. 31-33)
 - a. Gezer is not in the alliance, but it joins the fight at Lachish (v. 33) – the city is *not* attacked, but its king is killed at Lachish
4. **fifth city:** Israel moves from Lachish to Eglon (vv. 34-35)
5. **sixth city:** Israel moves from Eglon to Hebron (vv. 36-37)
 - a. **note:** the author mentions “its towns” (see also Debir; v. 38), which implies that these cities are more than just a single city-state, but a loose confederation of small towns around a large center
6. **seventh city:** Israel moves from Hebron to Debir (vv. 38-39)
 - a. **warning:** Debir is *also* the name of the king of Eglon, part of the alliance (confusing)
7. the author summarizes the conquest of S Canaan (vv. 40-43)
 - a. the territory in question is demarcated as the entire territory S and W of Jerusalem, through the hill country down to the Negev (see map below)
 - b. **IOW:** this first step of the Conquest is *thorough* and *complete* – the entire territory of Judah is now under Israelite control, all because God “fought for Israel” (v. 42)

III. The Importance of the Amorite Conquest (Joshua 10:24-25)

Content

a. the message in the execution of the five kings

1. Joshua instructs the “*chiefs of the men of war*” (i.e. the military leaders) to put their feet on the necks of these kings – to hold them down and (literally) step on their necks (probably not all at once!)
2. it is a **message of fulfillment** to both to Israel and to Canaan (in that day)
 - a. **to Israel:** God has given you supremacy over these peoples; you are to see and remember the power of God in giving these nations over to you (frankly!) quite easily and quickly
 1. i.e. your defeat of these peoples (and taking their land!) fulfills the promise made to Abraham 600 years earlier (Genesis 15:18f) – the Canaanite land is yours
 - b. **to Canaan:** God has now come in judgment over you; you are getting what you deserve for being pagan and wicked, rebelling against your Creator in spite of his knowledge within you
 1. i.e. your defeat at the hands of these peoples (and losing your lives!) fulfills the “promise” made to Abraham 600 years earlier (Genesis 15:16) – the judgment of Yahweh is yours
3. it is a **message of supremacy** to both the elect and to the reprobate (in our day)
 - a. mirrored in the Lord making his enemies a “*footstool*” (Psalm 110:1 cf. Hebrews 10:12-14)
“The LORD says to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’ ... But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”
 1. i.e. Christ has defeated his enemies; the judgment is where he “puts his feet” upon their necks
 2. **that day of judgment has not yet come, but ... it has been announced ...**
 - b. in the NT, **kerygma** = proclamation; preaching; the **message** of the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:21)
“For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.”
 1. **to the elect:** God has through Christ given you supremacy over the forces of sin and death
 2. **to the reprobate:** God has through Christ set the date for your judgment – repent and believe!
 - c. **we preach the gospel not just to save the elect, but also as an announcement of judgment upon those who persist in their rebellion – thus, all preaching of the gospel is “successful” and we must preach that message to everyone**
 1. **the elect are saved by it, the reprobate are judged by it – we only need to proclaim it**



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