
JOSHUA AND THE PROMISED LAND



After wandering in the wilderness for forty years, Moses handed over the leadership of the Hebrew nation to Joshua, who brings the children of Israel into the promised land of Canaan.

According to the Bible, after entering Canaan, Joshua had to go to war with the peoples who occupied the land.

There is an amazing piece of evidence to support this. A letter has been found, written by a man named Abdi-Hiba, Governor of Jerusalem, to Pharaoh Akhenaten who reigned between 1387 and 1366 B.C., requesting aid from Egypt in fighting the approaching Hebrews. The letter states the following:

"Why do you not hear my call for help? All the governors are lost; the king, my lord, does not have a single governor left! Let my lord, the king, send troops of archers, or the king will have no lands left."

"All the lands of the king are being plundered by the Habiru (Hebrews). If archers are here by the

end of the year, then the lands of my lord, the king, will continue to exist; but if the archers are not sent, then the lands of the king, my lord, will be surrendered."

Compare this with the following Bible statement found in Joshua 10: 1-5:

"Now it came to pass when Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it; . . . Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying, "Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel." Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, . . . gathered together and went up, they and all their armies, and camped before Gibeon and made war against it."

The Bible states in Joshua 10:26 that Joshua defeated these kings, captured them and killed them, including the king of Jerusalem, Adoni-Zedek. The letter written by Abdi-Hiba was probably written after the Biblical event by the successor of Adoni-Zedek, Abdi-Hiba, as a last ditch effort to stop the advancing Hebrews.

The time frame of this letter also corresponds to the dating found in the Bible.

According to 1Kings 6:1, the Exodus was 480 years before King Solomon built the temple, which occurred in 967 B.C., that would date the Exodus at approximately 1447 B.C.

Right after the Golden calf incident recorded in Exodus chapter 32, chapter 33 verse 11 states that Joshua was a young man at this time. The Hebrew word used here for young man refers to a boy of an age somewhere between infancy and adolescence. Lets say Joshua was 15 years old at the time that the Lord gave the Ten commandments to Moses. Then

tack on another 40 years wandering in the wilderness, which means he would have been approximately 55 years old when he first entered into the land of Canaan in 1407 B.C.

Joshua 24:29 states that he lived to be 110 years old, which means he would have died around 1352 B.C. And according to historians, the Abdi-Hiba letter was written between 1387 and 1366 B.C., right in the middle of Joshua's conquest of Canaan.

Fascinating!

Other letters requesting aid from Egypt have also been discovered that were written during this same time frame. These letters are part of what are known as the Amarna tablets.

The following letter is from a man named Shuwardata, governor of Gath:

"May the king, my lord, know that the chief of the Apiru (Hebrew) has besieged the lands which your god has given me; but I have attacked him. Also let the king, my lord, know that none of my allies have come to my aid, it is only I and Abdu-Heba who fight against the 'Apiru (Hebrew) chief."

"Zurta, the prince of Accho, and Indaruta, prince of Achshaph, were bribed with fifty chariots by the 'Apiru so that they would not come to my help; now they are against me. I plead with the king my lord, if you agree, send Yanhamu, and let us quickly go to war, so that the lands of the king, my lord, might be restored to their original boundaries!"

Shuwardata governor of Gath is also mentioned in the following letter from a man named Milkilu, a prince of Gezer, with whom he was allied:

"Let it be known to the king that there is great hostility against me and against Shuwardata. I ask the king, my lord, protect his land from the approaching 'Apiru."

These two men later seem to have offered allegiance to Joshua, as evidence from a second letter from Abdi-Heba, governor of Jerusalem:

"Let it be known what Milkilu and Shuwardata did to the land of the king, my lord! They sent troops of **Gezer, troops of Gath** . . . they took the land of Rubutu; the land of the king went over to the 'Apiru (Hebrews)."

"But now even a town near Jerusalem, Bit-Lahmi (Bethlehem) by name, a village which once belonged to the king, has fallen to the enemy . . . Let the king hear the words of your servant Abdi-Heba, and send archers to restore the imperial lands of the king! But if no archers are sent, the lands of the king will be taken by the 'Apiru people. This act was done by the hand of Milkilu and Shuwardata."

This is interesting, because even though Joshua destroyed most of the inhabitants of the cities he came across, the city of Gath was spared. Joshua 11:22 states: "No Anakites were left in Israelite territory; **only in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod did any survive.**"

Another letter indicates that the prince of Gezer and the prince of Shechem surrendered to Joshua during the conquest of the land:

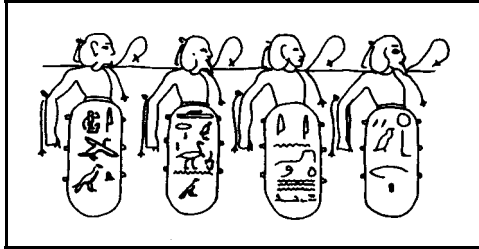
"See the actions taken by Milkilu, the prince of Gezer, and the sons of Lab'ayu, the princes of Shechem, who have handed over the land to the 'Apiru."

This letter also confirms the Bible, in that these two cities were also spared in Joshua's conquest, and they are mentioned together in Joshua 21:21.

Another amazing find that confirms the Book of Joshua was found on the walls of an Egyptian temple at Medinet Habu. The walls contained a list of cities that Rameses II recorded as enemy towns. The cities are represented on the wall by a man bearing a shield, and within the shield is the name of the city.

Among the list of cities were **Janum, Aphekah and Hebron.**

Joshua 15:53-54 states that the among the cities on the border of the children of Judah were "**Janum , . . . Aphekah, . . . Kirjath Arba (Hebron).**"



**WALL AT MEDINET HABU
"HEBRON, JANUM & APHEKAH"**

THE GREATEST WORDS OF JOSHUA:

"But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Joshua 24: 15

"Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God."

Joshua 3:9

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