

1 & 2 Samuel Series

Lesson #053

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Dean Bible Ministries

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THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S

HOLY WAR: AI AND CONSECRATION

1 SAMUEL 15; JOSHUA 8

Is There Such a Thing as Biblical Holy War?

1. The term *Holy War* is not used in the Bible.

2. The biblical term is

**חרם-1 *cherem*-1 hof imperf 3 masc sing
to ban, devote, destroy**

The basic meaning is the exclusion of an object from the use or abuse of man and its irrevocable surrender to God. The word is related to an Arabic root meaning “*to prohibit, especially to ordinary use.*” The word “harem,” meaning the special quarters for Muslim wives, comes from it. It is related also to an Ethiopic root, meaning “*to forbid, prohibit, lay under a curse.*” Surrendering something to God meant devoting it to the service of God or putting it under a ban for utter destruction. (TWOT)

Consecration for service to God is dealt with in Lev. 27:28 (persons or things); Josh. 6:18; Mic. 4:13 (objects). Whatever is devoted to the Lord, be it human being, animal, or property, is considered most holy by God and is therefore not to be sold or redeemed by substituting something else. According to Num. 18:14 and Ezek. 44:29, all such objects are to be given to the priests for the support of the religious ceremonies. The gold, silver, bronze, and iron from Jericho, for instance, were so designated (Josh. 6:19). NIDOTTE

3. As such, the core idea of consecrating something to God informs us that the doctrinal application is going to relate to sanctification.

Unlike Islamic *jihad* or the heresy of the Christian Crusades, fighting in a *cherem* did nothing toward salvation or spiritual growth and was not to enrich the victor.

4. In the Bible there is a period of intense warfare between Israel and her neighbors, where God is authorizing Israel to destroy specific peoples because of their horrible sins and years of hostility toward God. These were the Canaanite groups who were guilty of the grossest religious sins of all time—infant sacrifice, sexual orgies, and temple prostitution. These religions embody the worst that human history had to offer.

9. During this limited period of history, from the Conquest in 1406 BC through the last period of Saul's kingship. The rules of engagement in Deut. 20:16–18, which applied to the Canaanites, were distinguished from the rules of engagement in 20:10–15, which applied to non-Canaanite populations.

****No one since *ca.* 1050 BC has been authorized to engage in *cherem*.**

13. The battles of Jericho and Ai



Waters of Jordan
"stopped" (Josh. 3:16ff)

Adam

Mt. Ebal

Shechem

Mt. Gerizim

Shiloh

Bethel

Khirbet Makater

Aiath

Ai

Gilgal

Khirbet Nisya

Gibeon

Jericho

W. Nimrin River

Shittim

Jebus (Jerusalem)

Bethlehem

W. Faria River

Jabbok River

River

W. Makkuk R.

W. Qelt River

Jordan

BRONZE AGE

3300–1200 BC

EB–EARLY BRONZE

3000–1900 BC

Post-diluvian
Patriarchs

MB–MIDDLE BRONZE

1900–1550 BC

Abraham,
Isaac,
Jacob,
Joseph

LB–LATE BRONZE

1550–1200 BC

LB-1 1550–
1400 BC

Exodus Conquest
1447 BC 1407 BC

John Garstang

Excavated in 1928, 1930.

**Wrote the definitive work on
Bronze Age pottery.**

**Jericho existed from a
remote age.**



J Garstang (1876 – 1956)





Jericho, Tell
es-Sultan
mudbrick
collapse in front
of revetment wall



Jericho, Tell es-Sultan collapsed mudbrick wall with Bryant Wood



“The meticulous work of Kenyon showed that Jericho was indeed heavily fortified and that it had been burned by fire. Unfortunately, she misdated her finds, resulting in what seemed to be a discrepancy between the discoveries of archaeology and the Bible. She concluded that the Bronze Age city of Jericho was destroyed about 1550 BC by the Egyptians. An in-depth analysis of the evidence, however, reveals that the destruction took place at the end of the 15th century BC (end of the Late Bronze I period), exactly when the Bible says the Conquest occurred.”

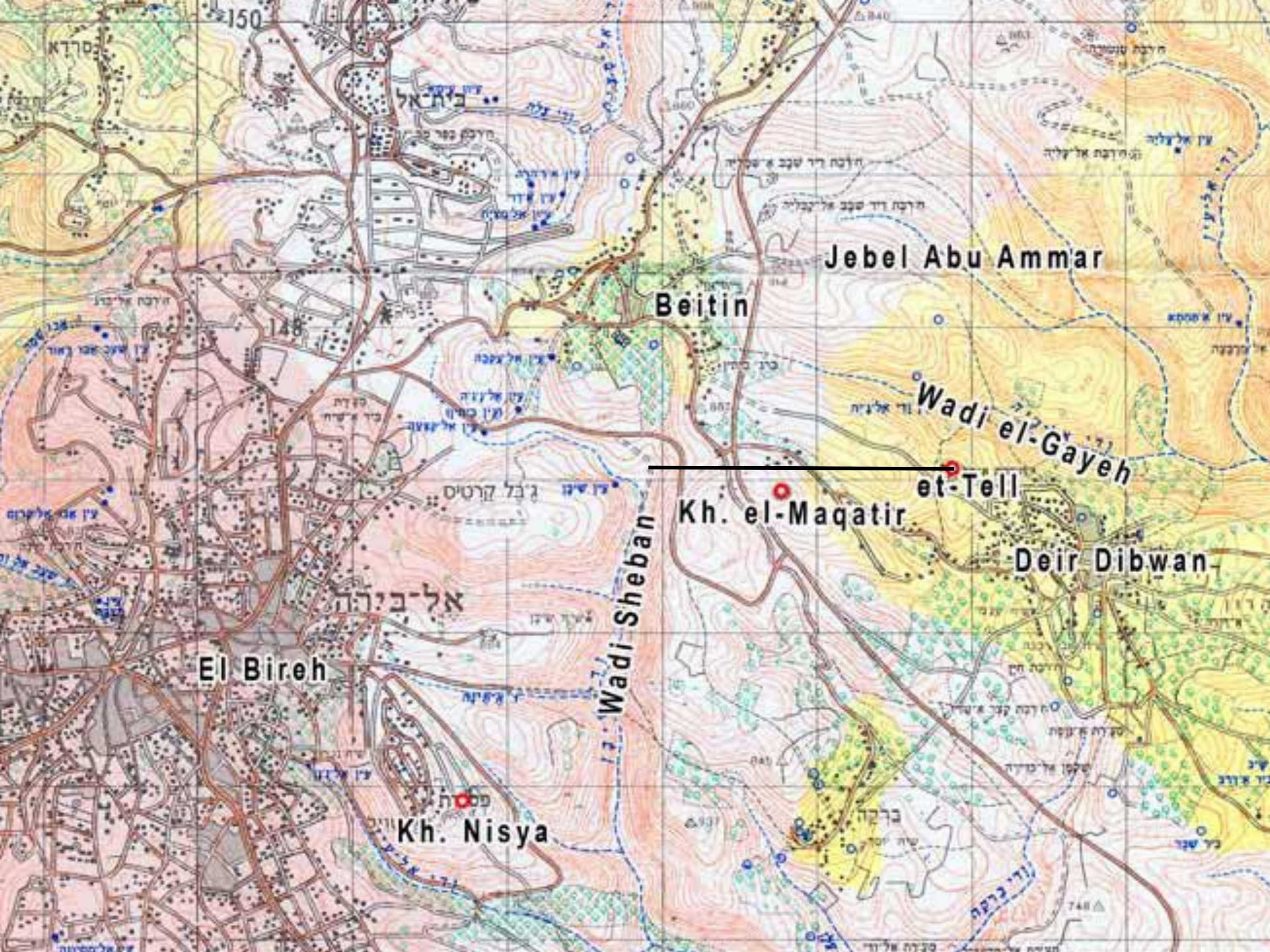
~Wood 1990.

Josh. 7:1, “But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel.

Josh. 7:2, “Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, ‘Go up and spy out the country.’ So the men went up and spied out Ai.”

Gen. 12:7, “Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I will give this land.’ And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

Gen. 12:8, “And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.”



סרדא

150

בית אל

Jebel Abu Ammar

Beitin

Wadi el-Gayeh

Kh. el-Maqatir

et-Tell

Deir Dibwan

El Bireh

Wadi Sheban

אל-בירה

Kh. Nisya

סגרת אל-רוד



Josh. 7:3, “And they returned to Joshua and said to him, ‘Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for the people of Ai are few.’”

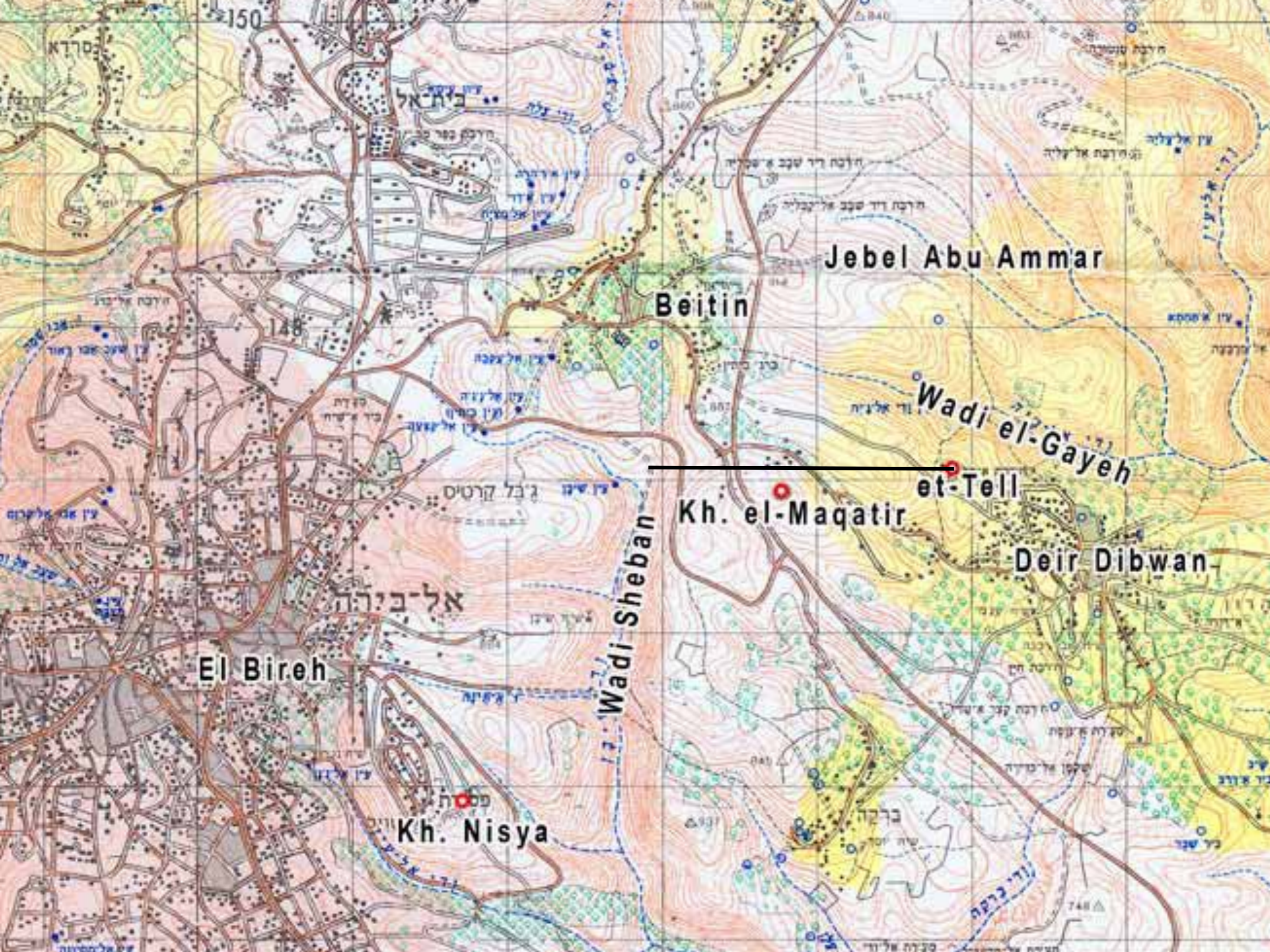
Josh. 7:4, “So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai.”

Josh. 7:5, “And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent;”

Josh. 7:11, “Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff.

Josh. 7:12, “Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you.”

Josh. 7:13, “Get up, sanctify the people, and say, ‘Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the LORD God of Israel: “There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you.” ’ ”



Jebel Abu Ammar

Beitin

Wadi el-Gayeh

Kh. el-Maqatir

et-Tell

Deir Dibwan

El Bireh

אל-בירה

Kh. Nisya

Wadi Sheban



The city of Ai and the camp-enclosure of Hazor were apparently abandoned from that time (late 15th century BC). While Jericho was not rebuilt ... for some centuries.



J Garstang (1876 – 1956)





Khirbet el-Maqatir

Beitin

Et-Tell

Et-Tell, Khirbet el-Maqatir, Beitin aerial from east







From Et-Tell looking due west





Et-Tell from south



Et-Tell Early Bronze southern fortifications











**Josh. 8:1, “Now the LORD said to Joshua:
‘Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all
the people of war with you, and arise, go
up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand
the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his
land.’ ”**

Josh. 8:8, “And it will be, when you have taken the city, that you shall set the city on fire. According to the commandment of the LORD you shall do. See, I have commanded you.”

Josh. 8:9, “Joshua therefore sent them out; and they went to lie in ambush, and stayed between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai; but Joshua lodged that night among the people.”

Josh. 8:12, “So he took about five thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city.”