

## Jericho Lesson, Joshua Chapters 6-8

**Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in. <sup>2</sup> And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.**

City shut up. Can't get out, can't get in. No flow, closed. Not moving forward or back. In a place, situation, and circumstance where there was nothing happening. Why, because of Israel, they heard how God was delivering them. Afraid of them. When the spirit of God is with you, things that you used to be afraid of should really be running from you.

Now instead of surrendering...it was obvious that they saw the trends and what was coming, they decided to fortify themselves and try to defend their position.

The defense was out of fear. In the spiritual realm, if you see God at work, it is in vain for us to try and defend our position for the purpose of trying to retain power or status quo.

People who will not surrender will also close their doors to you when they see you arrive. God can still pull down walls and open doors that are closed to enable to fulfill your destiny in Him. It is part of the process of receiving God's best.

Verse 2 – God tells Joshua this is a done deal and that he already has the victory before it is a reality. Notice, God tells Joshua see what is happening around him.

- Application – it is important to see how God is moving things in your favor. God wants you to see it in the works.
- Even though the victory still seems far away, what God has already done is the blessed assurance that the victory is on the way.
- God wants Joshua to know that he already has it before he actually enjoys it. This allows him to act like it is already done...this is faith.
- It is not a blind faith because Joshua has the word of promise from God in the earlier chapters and now, he can also see some evidence, so his faith is in a God who will finish what He started. He is standing on the promises of God. We can stand on His promises also and based upon the word and what He has done so far.

Didn't say He will, said He had already given the victory to him, even though he hadn't received it in the natural yet. Tell him to see or observe. There was something he could see that provided evidence that the victory was going to be his, in fact, based upon what he saw, he should have had confidence that it was already a done deal.



God has to tell him or show him to look so he can see victory too.

This thing is a done deal. Do you see it yet in your own life? Notice it is not Joshua who gets this victory....it is God who gets the victory, and He gives it to Joshua. How can you fail when God is fighting the battle for you.

**<sup>3</sup> And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. <sup>4</sup> And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. <sup>5</sup> And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.**

God gives him directions for how the victory should be achieved. Surround the city. Go around one time for six days. Let them see you out in the open for six days. Just had to march and obey, it wasn't that hard. Doing it this way brings God the glory.

After 6 days, circle on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, 7 times, blowing the shofars with 7 priests. Ark symbol of God's presence is involved in this process.

I have often wondered why God waits for seven days before destroying the city; why not do it on the first day? I have come to conclude that the method and process is a picture of end time prophesy. I see it also as a picture of God's wonderful grace and mercy because Jericho has six days to repent and surrender before time runs out.

- So too God is merciful and not slack concerning His promises but is long suffering not willing that any should perish so He gives all the chance and hope for life; but time will run out and judgement will come.
- This is also a test of the faithfulness of God's people; they still must follow directions in order to receive and enjoy the victory.

7<sup>th</sup> day at the trumpet blast, it will be time to shout, and when they shout, the wall, what was keeping them out and blocking them would fall down flat.

When you shout, get ready to go up. They ascended. Before you can go up, something's got to fall down or be destroyed. God's plan for His people in the story works the same way for us. The process is the same. God will bring us further along and closer to our destiny but there may be barriers and obstacles in the way. God will give us instructions (a Word) to show us what to do. So, there is a role we must play to participate in the victory. At the end of the battle....we ascend or rise up in victory...amen!



Notice the scripture seems to say every person will ascend one behind the other. Application -- someone may go up before you and but then you will be next. Follow the path of people who are going up in front of you. Follow the right people. Don't be discouraged if you see other going up before you do.....instead of hating...rejoice because you time is coming when you are standing on the promises and following the word.

**<sup>6</sup> And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD. <sup>7</sup> And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the LORD. <sup>8</sup> And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. <sup>9</sup> And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets. <sup>10</sup> And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.**

Joshua got the instructions from God and then passed them on to the priests. Noticed, He told them what he got from God. However, he didn't tell them everything, only what they needed to know for right now, today.

Why do you think Joshua didn't tell them about what to do on the 7<sup>th</sup> day? They needed to follow the instructions for the first six days first before they get further instructions. God will often provide the vision to the leader, but not everyone is ready or able to receive all the instructions at one time.

Armed people in front of the Ark. God has your back as you get ready to go forward into battle. Moving while the covenant and promises were behind them. The foundation of what you do and how you move should be based upon the covenant.

Order of the movement. Armed people went first; priests went next, Ark followed next and then the rear guard. Some people move forward with God behind them and pushing, others move with God leading or eyes on His presence. Not sure it really matters as long as you are powered and motivated by the Spirit and presence of God....He better be in the middle of your actions.

**<sup>11</sup> So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp. <sup>12</sup> And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. <sup>13</sup> And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward came after the ark of the LORD, the priests**

**going on, and blowing with the trumpets. <sup>14</sup> And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.**

Circled the city once, then went into the camp. Started out early in the AM. Took up the covenant before they started anything else. We should do the same. Get up early and start with the promises of God. Went on continually, didn't stop obeying.

Repeated this 6 days as instructed. It may not happen the way you expected it, so just do it God's way. Why 6 times?

- Repentance opportunity.
- Six is the number of man and on the 7<sup>th</sup> day we rest and God provides for us.
- To let the people know it was only the Lord and not what we do/did. Each time they go around they see the magnitude of what they are up against.
- Teaching the people patience. We want things done sooner, but He wants to teach us to have patience, to keep on going even if it seems difficult.

**<sup>15</sup> And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. <sup>16</sup> And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.**

There was a time to be quiet and a time to shout. You gotta know what time it is. Teaching disciple and self-control. Hold your peace because God will fight for you.

Every day, they surround the problem with the presence of God (the Ark). The last day they have a much longer march. Marching around Jericho wasn't a short walk in the park. They were required to do more as they went further along in the process.

Application – just hang in there standing on the promises and as you go, you will be able to do somethings you didn't have to do before. Don't be discouraged when it seems harder; if God is still with you, in your obedience, you are probably closer to your victory than ever before....Amen!

Now I don't know what they shouted, but I imagine praise must have been involved in it. Obedience to the Word and instructions of God and abiding in His presence (the Ark), and a shout of praise and victory are needed and required before you receive your breakthrough. Praise is always necessary.

Notice the reason for shouting that Joshua gives....shout because the Lord has given you the victory even before you receive. So, I will praise Him before my victory gets here....so that my victory gets here. I praise and thank God in advance by faith.



If Joshua is giving these instructions to the people, what do you think God wants us to be doing as we pursue the Promise Land and His very best?

God gave them this victory.

**17 And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.**

City/place cursed. That place defiled everything in it except Rahab. Death sentence on everything except her. Why, because she protected the servants/messengers of God's people. Notice she was saved before the judgement came. SO many others could have also been saved if they had only believed and not continued to rely on their own strength and defense.

You are doing a good thing when you protect or cover God's messengers. It might save your life.

**18 And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. 19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.**

Don't get connected with those things that you are destroying or that God tells you to take completely out. Problem is we get connected to those things that we may have already defeated. Getting connected to cursed things and put their curse on you and make you accursed.

When you take it up, connected to it, curse gets on you, and causes trouble for the people connected to you and where you live. Talk to me. Some of us hiding some stuff from Jericho and it may be causing you and those around you some trouble.

Application – don't take up the things you previously defeated. For example, I don't drink any more. I already defeated and kicked my drinking problem, so I don't need to pick up again what I defeated before.

What is it you have overcome but you are still tempted sometimes in your victory to pick it up again? It is important to note that Joshua gives them this warning. If it wasn't a real danger to them, then he would not have to have warned them. Question, is there still a danger for us today that we should still heed this warning?

**20 So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man**

**straight before him, and they took the city. <sup>21</sup> And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.**

When the people did as instructed, they got the results they were promised. I believe the same formula works today. When we follow the instructions of God....not just one day, but every day, and praise Him in advance....we will get the same results and overcome our circumstances in the end.

Cannot just practice faith one day only.....they were faithful in that they followed the instructions the entire week. How has your week been going after your Sunday is over?

Destroyed everything. Don't leave anything alive that's part of that curse. One commentary I used (Dan Guzik) points out that while the actions seem harsh, this was a judgement against the spiritual wickedness that existed.

**<sup>22</sup> But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. <sup>23</sup> And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel.**

Rahab saved and all that she had, because of what she did while still in that place. Her faith in the God of Israel saved her alive. Her turning from trusting in her people and their ways and this great wall and turning instead to God and placing her trust and hope in Him through faith allowed her to keep what should have been lost. This was not only about Rahab....her whole family was saved.

I have often noticed in this scripture that while she was saved and found favor, she is still in the Old Testament referred to as the harlot. This label is dropped in the New Testament. Notice that when she was saved, they didn't bring her directly into the camp of Israel. Instead, she is left just outside the camp. The spiritual relevance appears to be that while saved through her belief, she still needed to go through the process of being cleansed and learning how to live as one of God's people.

Application – we have a responsibility as believers and the church to not just bring people into a saving knowledge, but to make disciples and followers of Christ so they can be truly new creatures and learn the new and living way. Rahab's best was not just being saved, she has a much greater role and brighter future....which is the plan of God for us....to prosper.

**<sup>24</sup> And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.**

**<sup>25</sup> And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.**

God provided them rules for how to handle the stuff they would obtain. Silver, gold, valuables are dedicated to God. They come to the Lord.

We should be careful to bring an offering from the spoil back to the Lord.

Again, we see Rahab receive favor and an inheritance. Nothing belonging to her of importance was lost. This is all because she helped others and protected the message. How do you support the work of the Kingdom?

**<sup>26</sup> And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.**

**<sup>27</sup> So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country.**

That place cursed, and curse upon those who try to rebuild upon that foundation. There are some places that don't need to be used as foundations or built up ever again. Some stuff you just have to let die. Dangerous thing to rebuild in places that God has previously destroyed.

In our relationships, God can still knock down walls but be careful in the flesh not to building back up again.

My commentaries refer to 1 Kings 16:34 where someone did rebuild the city and came under the curse.

Joshua had the Lord with him and that brought him favor and fame. People were talking about the things he was doing. There was evidence of God's presence with him. When you obey the Lord, He will elevate you among others.

Other observations:

Mt 21:31

Hebrews 11:30

Joshua means Yeshua or salvation. 10 nations (Gen 15 in the promised land that shouldn't be there). This is a picture of end times. Joshua 3:10, 10 nations in Genesis, only 7 in Joshua, Daniel 7 – 10 horns coming out of the beast or 10 nations. Three nations wiped out by the others. 10 horns, but a little



horn comes out and three of the first horns plucked up by the root. By the time Joshua gets there, there are only 7 left, same thing happens in the future. 2 spies or witnesses save Rahab, 2 witnesses in Rev 11. Before the trumpets are blown, there is silence...see Rev 8:1, then the trumpets blow (8:6), Rev 11:15 – when the last trumpet sounds, there is a shout and the kingdoms of the world are defeated. Also note, they are marked with circumcision as servants, same as the sign/seal of the servants (Romans 4:11) see also Rev 7. Whole book of Revelation can be seen in this story. When Jericho falls, the Gibeonites make a treaty. They become servants but are protected. Rev 6:16, kings hide in the caves like they do in Joshua 10.



## Joshua Chapter 7

**But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.**

Why is God mad and fired up about this?

- Stealing from Him; brings a curse upon those He delivered and gave the victory to.
- disobedience;
- lack of faith;
- focus on the world rather than the Kingdom;
- adversely impacts the plan of God for His people;
- delays receiving the promises/best from God;
- causes others to experience defeat;
- results in judgement.

Did they disobey Joshua or God? They disobeyed both! David Guzik states these accursed things were associated with idol worship.

**<sup>2</sup> And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.**

Notice what Joshua is doing. The same thing that brought them success in Jericho, he again applies by sending out spies to go up.

Class comments – we noted that while they focused on the external intelligence gathering and examination, the real problem was internally. They needed to investigate themselves first. often the problem might not be the external issue alone; we should first examine ourselves before we engage the external problem.

**<sup>3</sup> And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few. <sup>4</sup> So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. <sup>5</sup> And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.**

So what happened? They just experienced a major victory against a much tougher opponent. God had blessed them, but now a much smaller and weaker obstacle chases them. They go from victory to defeat. This is one of the major upsets you will see. They were supposed to win, they were expecting to win....but were quickly defeated. They also suffered loss (36 died) and great discouragement.

David Guzik – what mattered was not the strength of the opponent but the help of God; this defeat melted their hearts because without God’s help, all would be lost.

**<sup>6</sup> And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.**  
**<sup>7</sup> And Joshua said, Alas, O LORD God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!** **<sup>8</sup> O LORD, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!** **<sup>9</sup> For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?**

Notice what Joshua does in response:

He prays. He immediately goes to God with his problem and stays there until he receives an answer.

- He is humble – even before he starts to pray
- Asks God why this has happened.
- Said rather than this defeat, it would have been better just to live in peace on the other side of Jordan. Sometimes defeat and disappointment will have you think that getting God’s best and the Promised Land is no longer an option.
  - God is not saying they can’t have it; they couldn’t obtain it like that or in the time originally planned until they got some things in order.
  - Just because you don’t have it and just because you are facing defeats in your walk....it doesn’t necessarily mean you won’t receive God’s best. It may be an indication that you are going about this the wrong way.
- He tells God about his fear and how this will be used by the enemy to defeat them.
- He shows concern for the name, reputation, and glory of God.

**<sup>10</sup> And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?**

God tells Joshua to get up and asks him a question. While Joshua starts out low, it is God’s intention that he not stay in that position. Where you start (being down), is not the end of the story.

**<sup>11</sup> Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.**

God explains to Joshua what has happened. Interesting, what they could hide from Joshua, they could not hide from the all-knowing and seeing God.

The sin was someone had held on to what was cursed, they stole items that didn't belong to them...in fact, it belonged to God, they broke it down so it could be more easily hid....that shows they knew what they were doing was wrong, finally God points out that they didn't separate the cursed items but instead included it with their own items. The cursed items were now a part of them and that is going to cause a big problem.

Application: It would seem to me that we need to be quite careful to not steal from God, not to hide from God, and be careful what we allow into our personal space/items.

**What belongs to God that we need to be careful we don't steal from Him?**

**<sup>12</sup> Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.**

The result of the sin was like a virus. Someone got connected to the items and got cursed. The cursed items cursed the good stuff they had. Then the curse jumped on the community of believers. The result of the curse was they could no longer defeat their enemies, no more victories, God is no longer with them. The only way to get back on track was to remove the accursed from them.

Please note, the **accursed things caused God to no longer be with them. They didn't know** that God wasn't with them when they went out into battle. This is a serious problem (similar to Samson's issue) when Christians think they are doing a good thing but not realizing there is something separating them from God and He is not with them.

Notice, the **actions of one can adversely impact an entire community of believers.** Also note that **without the defeat, there is no repentance and recovery.** So, while a huge disappointment and loss, it had a significant benefit in the end.

**<sup>13</sup> Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.**

**<sup>14</sup> In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be,**

**that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man. <sup>15</sup> And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.**

The remedy for this condition was a period of separation. Separation from the accursed things. Next, an examination is to be conducted to find the source of the problem and then remove it. The sentence is harsh since it caused foolishness and defeat/death in Israel.

They violated the contractual agreement with God. See Deuteronomy 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 28.

Observation: Look at how Joshua is supposed to discover the accursed thing. The Lord will identify the problem for him. God will search out the issue and identify the problem.

Application for today: How will we identify the accursed things in our life and pursuit of His best according to His plan?

- Psalm 139, Psalm 119:105, consider these verses.

God explains they cannot stand, cannot win, cannot have break-through, cannot receive and enjoy God's best, no complete victory.....until this accursed thing is first identified and removed. If we are not experiencing victory, it may not be that the problem is too big....it may be that the problem is on the inside....with us. Until we deal with it, we will be missing the power and presence of God when we go out to address it. There are some things we probably need to be asking God about.....is it I?

Maybe that is why it is called the accursed thing.....because we are cursed and not blessed until this curse is removed.

**<sup>16</sup> So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken: <sup>17</sup> And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken: <sup>18</sup> And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.**

They must have determined the root cause of the problem by taking lots. We too should also analyze the root cause of our failures.

Question: I wonder why God didn't just tell Joshua up front who it was? God obviously knew who it was from the start. Why go through this process of examination and involve all the folks and take the time for all this?

**<sup>19</sup> And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.**

**<sup>20</sup> And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: <sup>21</sup> When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.**

Even after a mistake and sin, you can still bring God glory by humbly admitting to Him.

Notice the process of the fall. Achan saw something he liked (clothes, etc.). He coveted these things. This means he didn't sin when he first saw them; that was only the first step (lust of the eye). The sin was really birthed when he desired these things more than obedience and honoring God. The sin is executed when he actually took them and acted in obedience to his lust. See also 1 John 2:15-17.

We really have to guard our minds and win the battle there over what we see.

Theft is involved because the gold and silver he took really was supposed to be dedicated to God according to Chapter 6:18.

**<sup>22</sup> So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. <sup>23</sup> And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. <sup>24</sup> And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.**

This is translated as the Valley of Trouble.

The root cause for their trouble is brought out in the open and no longer hidden. Notice, the initial joys and gains from sin doesn't last long and in the end the gain is not worth the pain.

**<sup>25</sup> And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. <sup>26</sup> And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.**



Judgement is executed. When the obstacle is removed, God turns from His anger and turns again to favoring His people. That didn't and doesn't happen until confession and repentance takes place. Very next chapter, God gives them the victory over an enemy that defeated them earlier.

## Joshua Chapter 8

**And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land: <sup>2</sup> And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee an ambush for the city behind it.**

After eliminating the root cause of their defeat in Chapter 7, God tells Joshua to fear not. If God tells him this, there must have been fear evident in Joshua. I wonder what he could have been afraid of.

- Fear that God was still mad
- Fear of failure again
- Fear that they might not make it to the Promised Land

Whatever the reason for his fear, God wanted to reassure him through His word that victory after a defeat was on the way.

What was said that would encourage Joshua included:

- Take everyone with you that war, the focus is on what he has left and not on what he has lost.
- Go to Ai and see or observe; even though you lost to the enemy before.
- God is with them and for them again and has already Joshua the victory before it happens.
- Reminds Joshua of how the previous victory was obtained.
- Promises a great reward after the victory.
- Shows Joshua a different approach this time....it won't take seven days.

Application for today: Seeing what God told Joshua that encouraged him, can we use these same words today and apply them by faith to our own situations? I believe so. Let's see.....if you have ever been fearful and discouraged about the future and doubtful if you will receive and enjoy God's best...then perhaps the following word will help reverse these feelings:

- Look at what God has allowed you to retain. Know that after repentance God is with you and will use what you still have left to bring you victory.
- Remember how He has delivered you before and expect Him to do it again. Know that faithful obedience has rewards. Know that it is the plan of God for you to enjoy the spoils of victory.
- It might happen a little differently, the instructions may be adjusted, but the final results will be the same....you will win.

**<sup>3</sup> So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai: and Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour, and sent them away by night.**

Look at the impact that the word from the Lord had on Joshua. He was able to rise up from his fear and dismay and revive the people to rally them into battle to claim their victory. The purpose of the word of God was to encourage Joshua to rise up after being down. God has the same purpose and desire for us.

He obeys the word of the Lord and selects “all” the people of war. Obedience is still required in order to receive and enjoy victory.

**<sup>4</sup> And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, even behind the city: go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready: <sup>5</sup> And I, and all the people that are with me, will approach unto the city: and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them, <sup>6</sup> (For they will come out after us) till we have drawn them from the city; for they will say, They flee before us, as at the first: therefore we will flee before them. <sup>7</sup> Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city: for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. <sup>8</sup> And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, that ye shall set the city on fire: according to the commandment of the LORD shall ye do. See, I have commanded you.**

So the approach against Ai is different than Jericho. At Jericho, the enemy was afraid and trusting in their own strength to hold out. Here, the enemy is prideful from their earlier success against Israel. God is using their current condition as an opportunity to defeat them.

The instructions this time is to hide near the rear of the city. Then the other group would lure the enemy out of the city. We can clearly see the enemy is falling into the same trap as Israel before.....they are trusting in their earlier success and blindly assuming they can go out and have similar results again. When pride is involved....you might be in for a surprise.

Joshua explains that it is the Lord who will deliver the victory into their hands and gives them instructions for what to do to have complete victory.....leave nothing in the city behind....burn it all.



**<sup>9</sup> Joshua therefore sent them forth: and they went to lie in ambush, and abode between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai: but Joshua lodged that night among the people.**

**<sup>10</sup> And Joshua rose up early in the morning, and numbered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. <sup>11</sup> And all the people, even the people of war that were with him, went up, and drew nigh, and came before the city, and pitched on the north side of Ai: now there was a valley between them and Ai. <sup>12</sup> And he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city.**

**<sup>13</sup> And when they had set the people, even all the host that was on the north of the city, and their liers in wait on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley.**

**<sup>14</sup> And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw it, that they hastened and rose up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain; but he wist not that there were liers in ambush against him behind the city.**

**<sup>15</sup> And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. <sup>16</sup> And all the people that were in Ai were called together to pursue after them: and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city. <sup>17</sup> And there was not a man left in Ai or Bethel, that went not out after Israel: and they left the city open, and pursued after Israel.**

Verse 9, they follow the instructions from God. God had given them the victory in their hands but they would never enjoy or experience it until and unless they obey the word of God by faith. Obedience is still a critical success factor.

Example of good leadership, Joshua is right there camping with the people.

The enemy sees Joshua and God's people run away as if they are beaten. God's plan is that when the enemy thinks His people have no hope and are beaten....that the enemy will come out thinking that they are about to win, but God has different plans.

Application for today: Just because it looks like you are defeated, if God is with you, you can expect the enemy to be in for a surprise. When it looks like your problem has you on the run, it may just be a matter of time before God turns the table around on your situation. Sometimes God wants others to think you are beaten, so He can get the glory when He turns it around in your favor.

The problem or the enemy doesn't have a clue that this situation is just an opportunity for God to demonstrate His power in your situation.

**<sup>18</sup> And the LORD said unto Joshua, Stretch out the spear that is in thy hand toward Ai; for I will give it into thine hand. And Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand toward the city. <sup>19</sup> And the ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand: and they entered into the city, and took it, and hasted and set the city on fire.**

God provides further direction and instructions for Joshua. Key point, when we obey the word of God, He will provide further instructions as we go. If you don't know what to do but you are obeying the last instructions and God is with you.....expect to receive a right now word for your right now situation.

Be careful to obey the word. This success doesn't happen without obedience. When Joshua obeys, things happen quickly.

**<sup>20</sup> And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that way: and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers. <sup>21</sup> And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city ascended, then they turned again, and slew the men of Ai.**

I love this scripture! Look at what has happened. The enemy was chasing after God's people to destroy them. They were running away from the problem and the enemy. However, they were following God's plan and soon His people start chasing after the problem that just a little while ago was chasing them.

Application: Do not be surprised that the plan of God for your situation is that the very problem that you are running from, God will turn things around and you will start chasing after and defeat the problem that was trying to and supposed to take you out. There are several situations and testimonies where what should have overtaken us and destroyed us, has now been defeated and overcome. What used to have me on the run, is now running from me.

**<sup>22</sup> And the other issued out of the city against them; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side: and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape. <sup>23</sup> And the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.**

**<sup>24</sup> And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness wherein they chased them, and when they were all fallen on the edge of the sword, until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword.**

How to hold on to your complete victory....obey the instructions from God. God is fighting against false worship so there was no room to let any of that survive.

**<sup>25</sup> And so it was, that all that fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand, even all the men of Ai. <sup>26</sup> For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.**

**<sup>27</sup> Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according unto the word of the LORD which he commanded Joshua.**

Oh, if only Achan had waited on the Lord. If he had just waited, what he stole and could only enjoy in secret and temporarily....is not as enjoyable as the reward and spoil they receive from this battle that he could have enjoyed openly and held onto it. Only what we do for Christ will last.

Application: We need to be patient. There is always a reward in our future when we obey the word of God and stay in alignment with Him in our relationship. When we lack faith and get impatient, then the temptation is to take matters into our own hands rather than wait on His timing.

**<sup>28</sup> And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, even a desolation unto this day. <sup>29</sup> And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day.**

Application: What you defeated and what God has given you victory over, make sure it will never rise up again and be a problem for you in the future. Israel is over Ai, they never have to face this enemy again. We may need to raise some stones to mark where we buried that last problem we chased down.

**<sup>30</sup> Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal, <sup>31</sup> As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings.**

According to my commentaries, this is in fulfillment of Deuteronomy 27-28. No craftsmanship was allowed on the altar so that man's works are not involved....all the glory belongs to God.

**<sup>32</sup> And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. <sup>33</sup> And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.**

**<sup>34</sup> And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law.**

I love what David Guzik outlined in his comments how this story outlines the spiritual history:

Obedience followed by victory; victory followed by blessing; blessing followed by pride and disobedience; disobedience followed by defeat; defeat followed by judgement; judgement followed by repentance; repentance followed by obedience; obedience followed by victory....

**<sup>35</sup> There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.**

Moses had performed this in Deuteronomy and Joshua picks up the same process and tradition here in the Promised Land. We bless the people as ministers when we read the word of the Lord.

Application: Nothing has changed. It is critical to our success as Christians to read and understand the word of God. Not just the parts we like....all of the word. This applies to everyone both Jews and Gentiles. It provides the understanding and instructions for how to be blessed and avoid curses. We still need the word.