

## ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE AND MOVE ON LESSON 7

**Series Subject: Accept the Challenge and Move On!**

**Lessons 5-10: Conquest of Canaan Josh. 5:1-12:24**

**Lesson 7: The Fulfilled Assignment, Ai Conquered Josh. 8:1-35**

**Today's Study:**

1. Reassurance Vv. 1-2
2. Readiness/Resolution Vv. 3-23
3. Resounding Victory Vv. 24-29
4. Rededication Vv. 30-35

**Time is available only for a brief discussion of review questions from previous lesson.**

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. Highlights from Lesson 6

- (a) What we saw in this account (Josh. 7) is the disobedience and greed of one man, Achan, adversely affecting the entire Israelite camp.
- (b) God's orders were to destroy everything in Jericho and no one was to take anything from Jericho for themselves. Everything was supposed to be destroyed or dedicated to God. Rahab and her family were spared because of her hospitality to the spies. (Josh. 6:17-23).
- (c) Achan not only violated strict orders by stealing but deceptively burying the stolen items underground in his tent.
- (d) Israel's first military attack against Ai failed and two of the lessons learnt are:
  - (1) **First**, they didn't consult with God, which revealed their self-confidence. As a result this must be remembered: **"Self-confidence, acting in the arm of the flesh, will lead to failure and defeat."**
  - (2) **Second**, keeping in mind that Achan's sin was the reason why God's presence and guidance were not with Israel. This must also be remembered: **When God's people sin it must be properly addressed and corrected as needed so that the work of God will continue to be effective in its role.**
- (e) Upon their defeat at Ai, Joshua earnestly sought God in prayer and supplication (Josh. 7:6-9). He was eventually informed by God what the underlying problem was and what must be done before normalcy could be restored (Josh. 7:10-13).
- (f) Note a few outstanding statements from Lesson 6:
  - (1) God is not content with our doing what is right some of the time. He wants us to do what is right all the time. We are under orders to eliminate any thoughts, practices, or possessions that hinder our devotion to Him.

- (2) When we are at the place Achan found himself (Josh 7:20-26), we all feel terrible about our sin, wishing we had never done it—**may God help us feel terrible about sin before we do it!!**
- (3) Those who find themselves under wrath must make sure there is absolutely no delay in putting away sin.
- (g) The remains of Achan and his family were burnt; the following was noted in our lesson: **The burning in this situation was a symbol of purifying and cleansing the evil of sin from among God’s people.**
- (h) Upon completing the removal of the accursed, we saw in Josh. 7:26 that the anger of the LORD was turned away from His people ... the presence and guidance of God was restored.
- (i) For those who are not regenerated, not delivered from the bondage of sin, or may have drifted from the path of righteousness, the only sure way to recover divine favor is the putting away of sin by true repentance and renewal through Jesus Christ (Isa. 53:4-6; 55:6-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19; etc.).
- (j) **Sin must be routed out, gotten rid of, removed, forsaken, taken away from one’s life!!**  
**Eph. 4:22 Amplified Bible**  
 “Strip yourselves of your former nature [put off and discard your old unrenewed self-] which characterized your previous life ...”

## 2. Introduction Josh. 8:1-325

*The following is a quote from the Preacher’s Outline and Sermon Bible.*

“How can a person live a victorious life, a life of conquest, triumph and victory over all that confronts him? Is it possible to go through life victoriously? To avoid all that confronts him? Is it possible to go through life victoriously? To avoid discouragement and defeat? To actually conquer all the enemies that seek to defeat and destroy life?  
 ... ..

The description of what life proves to be for so many people could go on. But if you are caught in the whirlwind of peaks and valleys of being up and down, there is the most wonderful news: a victorious life is possible. A person can conquer and triumph throughout life. All the enemies that seeks to defeat and destroy mankind can be overcome. **Victory is found in God, found in His love and care, in His presence and power that is available to us. This is the one lesson that we must learn: victory is in God and in God alone.**

This is the lesson that Joshua and the Israelites had to learn. There was victory—a victorious life over all the enemies that sought to destroy them. **But there was a price to pay for victory: the Israelites had to act, to take certain steps to achieve victory over their enemies.** God had promised to be with and to empower them, but they had to actually march forth and fight the battle. Victory would come as they arose and march forward to fight. They would be conquerors as they went forth to

conquer through the presence and power of God. They would triumph as they walked forward seeking the promised land. They would be triumphant and victorious through God alone . . . . . “

### 3. **Selected Verses Josh. 8:1-8, 21, 30, 31, 34 NKJV**

“Now the LORD said to Joshua: ‘Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go to Ai, see I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves. Lay an ambush for the city behind.’

So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai; and Joshua chose thirty thousand mighty men of valor and sent them away by night. And he commanded them saying ‘Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind the city. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready. Then I and all the people who are with me will approach the city; and it will come about, when they come out against us as first, that we will flee before them. For they will come out against us as at first, that we will flee before them. For they will come out after us till we draw them from the city, for they will say, They are fleeing before us as at the first. Therefore we will flee before them. Then you shall rise from ambush and seize the city, for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. 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.**’ . . .

Now when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city and that the smoke of the city ascended, they turned back and struck down the men of Ai. ....

Now Joshua built an altar to the LORD God of Israel in Mt. Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses: ‘an altar made of whole stones over which no man wielded an iron tool.’ And they offered on it burnt offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. ... .. 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. ... ..”

#### **A. Reassurance Josh. 8:1-2**

##### **1. Addressed (Josh. 7:26)**

(a) Israel was routed in their first attack against Ai.

(1) For one thing it was an act of self-confidence, arrogance and trusting the arm of flesh instead of God.

- There is no evidence of them seeking God prior the first attack on Ai; God’s counsel was not sought!
- The decision to use 3,000 soldiers also reveals that Israel was relying on the strength of their army to secure the needed victory.

(2) The other factor contributing to their failure was the sin of Achan.

- As we noted in our previous lesson, Israel was a corporate community and as it was in this situation, one man’s transgression affected the entire camp.
  - Achan’s sin was an affront (*insult, provocation, etc.*) to God and a devastating experience for Israel, because the presence and guidance of God was removed until the transgression was properly addressed.
- (b) Joshua obediently did as God had instructed him; the evil was cleansed and Israel was now reconciled with God.
- (c) Partial quote of: “Get Right with God.”  
 Get right with God  
 And do it now  
 Get right with God  
 And He will show you how  
 Kneel down at the cross  
 Where Jesus shed His blood  
 Get right with God  
 Get right with God!

## 2. Assurance (Josh. 8:1-2)

### Josh. 8:1a

**NKJV:** “Now the LORD said to Joshua: ‘Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed . . .’”

**Amplified Bible:** “Now the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Do not fear or be dismayed (intimidated) . . .’”

#### (a) God knows all about us!

(1) We saw in Josh. 7:26 that God was appeased when Israel addressed the issue in regard to Achan’s transgression. However, He communicates with Joshua with much needed words of comfort and assurance.

- Israel’s defeat at Ai was not an easy one to accept, especially as it relates to breach of the covenant with God. Most likely, Joshua still pondered on the matter which may have produced some discouraging thoughts.
- **Corruption and disruption within the Church (Universal) weakens the hands and dampens the spirit of leaders and members and hinders the work of God far more than any external opposition.**
- Likewise, Israel realized that any internal corruption was far more deadly than the malicious, hateful Canaanites.

(2) **Josh. 8:1a ESV:** “... Do not fear and do not be dismayed. ...”

- **“Fear”:** Is an unpleasant and often strong emotion caused by expectation or awareness of danger. Some similar words are anxiety, doubt, horror, unease, dismay, etc.
- **“Dismay”:** The loss of courage from alarm or fear. Some similar words are alarm, apprehension, panic, dread, etc.

- God instructed Joshua not to allow anxiety or apprehension to overtake Israel because the same attitude characterized their enemies (Jos. 2:8-11; 5:1).
  - Israel's enemies were crippled, distraught, disabled, etc. and this should not be true to Israel whose God is the living and true God.
- (b) The first key factor in regaining victory was to receive encouragement from God!
- (1) Achan's transgression brought devastating effects on Israel but they had been properly dealt with the situation, now it is time to move on!!
- (2) **If morale is low victory cannot be realized and Israel must go into battle relying wholly and solely on God.**
- Joshua was thus commanded: Deut. 31:6; Josh. 1:1, 5-7, 9, 18.
  - Joshua himself was courageous: Num. 13:20; Josh. 10:25.
  - In his farewell address, he exhorted Israel to be courageous (Josh. 23:6).
  - Now (Josh. 8) Joshua and all Israel must encourage themselves and move forward . . . **YES!! "Accept the Challenge and Move Forward!!"**
- (c) The believer in Christ faces the future because of Jesus Christ!!
- (1) As long as we falter and fail, we must immediately seek God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9; etc.) and do not habitually sin (1 John 3:9 . . . remember: the verse is referring to deliberately, knowingly and habitually practice sin).
- (2) Beloved, the perfect love of God in our hearts will bring assurance!!
- **1 John 4:18a Amplified Bible**  
"There is no fear in love [dread does not exist], but full-grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of the doors and expel every trace of terror!"
  - Our enemies are different from Joshua's, but we are also challenged not to fear!!  
*These references are listed without comments ... you may read the context of each for deeper understanding.*
    - Blessings in the Journey of life (Gen. 26:24)
    - Supplies Even in Famine (1 King 17:13)
    - Protection in Peril (2 Kings 6:16)
    - Strength in Weakness (Isa. 41:10)
    - Companionship in Trial (Isa. 43:1-3)
  - This was made mention of before but necessary to be repeated as often as possible. **Victory is realized and maintained by abiding in Jesus Christ, in Him we stand!!**
    - See John 15:4-7; Eph. 6:13; Phil. 4:1; 1 John 5:4; etc.
    - **Eph. 6:10 Amplified Bible**  
"In conclusion, be strong **in the Lord** [be empowered through your **union with Him**]; draw your strength **from Him** [that strength which His boundless might provides]."
- (d) **God assures Joshua of success against Ai.**  
**Josh. 8:1c NKJV**  
"See I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land."

(1) We saw similar assurance when Israel was preparing to attack Jericho (Josh. 6:2a).

- The same words were used in this situation (Josh. 8:1c)  
**Josh. 6:2a NKJV:** “See I have given Jericho into your hand ...”  
**Josh. 8:1c NKJV:** “See I have given into your hand the king of Ai ...”
- As we have noted before, God didn’t say: “I am going to ...” but “I have given ...”
  - In other words He was assuring Joshua, the victory was accomplished already!! Signed, sealed and delivered and will be fully realized!!
  - Similarly this is true:
    - In the salvation of souls: everyone who is willing can be saved from eternal damnation, because salvation is signed, sealed and delivered ... promised Gen. 3:15 ... made possible because of Jesus Christ; Matt. 1:21 ... through the work of the Holy Spirit; John 16:8; 1 Cor. 12:3. We often say to God: “Thank you for the plan of salvation and the grace that brought it down to man. (See also (Eph. 1, NB Vv. 13-14).
    - Also the child of God can be assured of all his needs supplied (Phil. 4:19; Heb. 11:1; James 1:5-6).

(2) Israel was assured of victory, and while Ai and all therein were given to Israel, it was absolutely necessary to acknowledge that such was divinely given: **“I have given ...” (Josh. 8:1).**

- The victory would be theirs because of God:  
**Psa. 44:3 ESV**  
 “For not by their own sword did they win the land, nor did their own arm save them, but your right hand your arm, and the light of your face, for you delight in them.”
- **The Refrain of “To God Be The Glory”**  
 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
 Let the earth hear His voice!  
 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
 Let the people rejoice!  
 O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,  
 And give Him the glory great things He has done.

### 3. Ambush ... The Strategy (Josh. 8:1-2)

(a) **Josh. 8:1b NKJV:** “... take all the people of war ...”

- (1) Previously they used 3,000 men (Josh. 7:3-4), now Joshua is encouraged to use all the men of war.
- (2) The fact remains, God could secure victory with 3 or 30 or 300 or 3,000, etc. because the battle is the LORD’S (1 Sam. 17:47; Ex. 14:14; 23:27; 2 Chron. 20:2, 3, 15, 29; 32:8; etc.

- (3) The previous attack on Ai was based on Israel's intuition, their determination, etc. now this attack would be by the guidance and presence of God!!
- (4) **"Seek ... first the kingdom of God ..."** (Matt. 6:33) *(Details not possible note a few pointers:*
- A summarized thought for Matt. 6:19-33 is: **"Putting God First."**
    - Unfortunately, we ever-so-often do things our way then pray for God's blessings or for His help **afterwards**.
    - Some may even pray before the action takes place but the matter was already appealing to the eyes, it had entered the mind and went to the heart (See "The Progression of Sin" in Lesson 6 pages 21-22). We must at all time **sincerely put God first!!**
  - When we sincerely seek God first, we will avoid the worry forbidden in our text (Matt. 6:25-33).
  - Had Israel consulted God before that failed attack on Ai the results would have been different.
  - We have been there, big or small, etc. but, beloved, the past is the past!!
    - The matter (whatever it may have been) has been routed, repentance done, restitution made, and reconciliation experienced, now it is time to retain and look forward to what God has to be done!!
    - **Beloved, victorious runners do not look back!! (See Phil. 3:13-21)**
      - Let me emphasize, we do not glory in our failures, but **if** they are covered with the blood of Jesus (1 John 1:5-10; etc.) we must move forward, be determined, with God's enabling, not to repeat past failures, keep trusting in God because He is able to keep what we have committed to Him (2 Tim. 1:12; Rom. 4:21; 2 Cor. 9:8; etc.).
      - **Phil. 3:13-14 NKJV**  
"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."
  - As it relates to Israel (Josh. 8), there was much ahead to be done in the conquest of the Promised Land. Beloved, we have much to be done especially in these days!! (John 4:35; Eph. 5:16; etc.).
- (b) In this war (with Ai) Israel was allowed to take the spoils of war.  
**Josh. 8:2b NKJV:** "Only its spoil and cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves."
- (1) The spoils of war
- This refers to any profits extracted as a result of winning a war or military activity.
  - God allows the soldiers to take spoils to themselves (collected and then divided).

- How much different if Achan had just waited; he could have had his heart's desire, **if only he had waited on the Lord!!**
  - So many facts are made obvious by Achan's violation, we have already discussed these in our previous lesson; also note:
    - He was dissatisfied with the rules and regulations regarding the spoils of Jericho (Josh. 6:17-19).
    - He didn't have the patience and trust in God to supply his needs.
    - His irrational actions resulted in him missing what these soldiers are about to be blessed with and unfortunately, his life was wasted.
  - Similarly, today, to so many "*delayed gratification*" is a waste of time, but the facts are obvious; as with Achan, if he had only overpowered his greed and selfish desires and obeyed God's Words (Josh. 7:7-19), he would eventually have his heart's desire along with God's blessings.
    - It is such an easy thing to take matters into our own hands and move forward without God, but beloved, consider the end product! (Prov. 14:12).
    - Waiting is not only essential but the results come with great blessings (a few examples: Psa. 27:13-14; Prov. 3:5-6; Isa. 40:31; etc.).
  - **Beloved, no man shall lose by his elf-denial**, I urge you, let God first have what is rightly His and witness for yourself the awesome results (1 Kings 17:8-16, NB v. 13).
    - Jericho was God's First Fruit in the conquest of Canaan; Achan's act was an affront (*insult offense, provocation, etc.*) to God and resulted in disaster.
    - God did not take Israel to the Promise Land to experience a lack but for them to be blessed ... this was a fact made clear in Josh. 8:2; see also Jer. 29:11; etc.
  - The disciples of Jesus Christ must deny themselves to the glory of God.
    - This means saying no to self, having our will wholly yielding to God's perfect will.
      - This was exemplified by Jesus throughout His entire earthly ministry: **Matt. 26:36-46, NB v. 42**; John 4:34; 9:4; etc.
      - See Matt. 16:21-28, NB Vv. 24-26.
      - It is better to give up the things that distract from the will of God and gain eternal life, rather than gaining the temporal things of this world and end experiencing eternal damnation.
    - There are many relevant references that you can refer to in regard to giving up the temporal for that which endures, for example Luke 12:15; 2 Cor. 4:18; Gal. 6:8; etc.
- (2) Why did God allow the soldiers to keep the war booty (plunder, etc.)? There were two governing principles regulating trophies from war.
- **First**, cities like Jericho were under a ban.



- Jericho was accursed because of its gross idolatry and their overwhelming evil; and was destined for either destruction (Deut. 20:16-18) or specified items were to be dedicated to God (Josh. 6:17-19).
  - Nothing from those banned cities, example Jericho, could be looted (*war trophies taken by the soldiers*); this restriction was also seen as a need for distinction, wherein the people of God must abstain from that which defiles (2 Cor. 6:17; Col. 2:21; etc.)
  - **Second**, the spoils of war distributed to soldiers were a normal part of warfare.
    - It provided the army and the nation with the necessary food, livestock and weapons needed to sustain itself in wartime.
    - Ai was not under ban and therefore the spoils of war from the city were allowed to be taken.
    - These items were necessary because soldiers were not paid; the plunder was part of the incentive and reward for going to war.
- (c) Ambush was the strategy recommended by God  
**Josh. 8:2c NKJV:** “Lay an ambush for the city behind it.”
- (1) This was a different strategy from that which was used against Jericho.
- They took seven days before the assault on Jericho was carried out; in this case it would be done in one day. God didn’t intend to prolong this attack; it was all according to God’s doing.
  - The walls of Jericho crumbled by the power of God; in this situation they will actively be involved, they had to arouse themselves and fight under God’s leadership.
- (2) The ambush strategy was God’s plan, a method Joshua may not have considered.
- It is a fact that we cannot always use the same methods; changes are necessary and are determined by several factors, at the same time when such change is necessary to be implemented.
  - We must be careful though that while methods change **the Word of God remains the same** (Psa. 119:89; Isa. 40:8; Matt. 5:18; 1 John 1:25).
  - Also, as we observe in our text, **we need to hear from God** and not just implement new methods based on human wisdom or any other factors irrelevant to God’s perfect will.
  - **Psa. 24:4-5 Amplified Bible**  
 “Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Guide me in Your truth and faithfulness and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation: for You [You only and altogether] do I wait [expectantly] all the day long.”
  - Those who are entrusted with leadership responsibility need God to entrust within them the needed directives to do His will.

**B. Readiness/Resolution Josh. 8:3-23**

*God had given Joshua the strategy for the battle against Ai; it was his responsibility to obey these instructions. The first attempt failed but conditions were now normalized and Joshua must move forward with the promises of God (Josh. 1:9; 8:1).*

**1. Questioning the morals of the strategy.**

- (a) Some scholars call into question the ethics behind the strategy of using an ambush.
- (b) It must be remembered that Joshua received the plan from God (Josh. 8:2, 8).
  - (1) If God says it, we then simply obey and do what He says!!
  - (2) Joshua was fully convinced that the Lord's method always worked and was willing to adhere to the instructions received.
- (c) In regards to the strategy, note:
  - (1) There was no evidence that such was unlawful.
    - As noted above, God Himself appointed it.
    - No league (alliance, affiliation, etc.) was broken.
    - We have no reason to think it was in anyway an unlawful violation and such was good in other wars.
  - (2) The enemy should have exercised much more vigilance in protecting their city.
    - Lack of wisdom was displayed in their pursuit of the enemy and leaving their city defenseless and taking in consideration that they were pursuing an army far more superior to theirs.
    - The Israelites were not to be blamed for taking advantage of their enemy's wrath and thoughtlessness; making themselves vulnerable for destruction.

**2. Quantity of soldiers (Josh. 8)**

*We will not join the debate in regards to the exact number of soldiers used. You should be aware that there are several opinions in regards to the exact number of soldiers Joshua used in this operation.*

- (a) There is some difficulty in adjusting the numbers that were employed in this second assault on Ai.
  - (1) In verse 3, we note that 30,000 chosen men were sent away by night. They were to wait in ambush **behind the city**. They were to move in and destroy the city (Vv. 4-8).
  - (2) In verse 12 we note he took 5,000 men to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai on the west side of Ai. *Some scholars believe these served as commando type ambush to cut off any possible reinforcement.*
  - (3) Then we saw Joshua with an unspecified number; these acted as decoy that allured Ai soldiers from the city (Vv. 14-16) thus making way for those in ambush to move in and destroy the city (Vv. 17-20).

- (b) As I have noted, there are several interpretation as it relates to the **actual** number of soldiers used in this attack. **Here is one example:**
- (1) Joshua with the people of war camped at a distance before the city of Ai.
  - (2) From those in the camp Joshua chose 30,000 men of valor to be employed for action (v. 3)
  - (3) Of the 30,000, he chose 5,000 to lie in ambush behind the city (v. 12).
  - (4) The contingent of soldiers with him were those remaining in camp (Vv. 14-17)
- (c) **Whatever may have been the actual numbers whether it was 30,000 or 35,000 or 50,000; even if it were 3,victory would be realized because the battle is the Lord's!!**

*If you observe carefully, you will notice that there were enemy soldiers from two cities pursuing the Israelites; they were from Ai and Bethel (Josh. 8:17).*

- (d) Joshua was given the general plan by God (Josh. 8:2) and was allowed by God to use his experience and divine enabling he was blessed with to produce the specific plan of battle.
- (1) **Psa. 25:9 Amplified Bible**  
"He leads the humble in what is right, and the humble He teaches His way."
  - (2) Joshua trusted in God and reaped accordingly and this was evident throughout his leadership. We are all exhorted to trust in God: **Prov. 3:5-6;** Psa. 37:3, 5; 118:8; Isa. 26:4.

### 3. Qualities of a brave leader

*We have discussed Joshua's characteristics throughout this series; at this time we are highlighting a few outstanding things displayed in this account (Josh. 8)*

#### (a) **His conduct and wisdom (Josh. 8:2)**

- (1) As noted, before, God gave him the general plan (Josh. 8:2), He left Joshua to his experience and divine enabling to lay out the specific plan of battle.
- (2) **Ecc. 7:19 Amplified Bible**  
"[True] wisdom is a strength to the wise man more than ten rulers or valiant generals who are in the city. [Psa. 127:1; 2 Tim. 3:15]."

#### (b) **His care and hard work (Josh. 8:10)**

- (1) As seen before he was an early riser. He had no time to lose; his mind was firmly fixed on his Master's business.
- (2) If we are going to maintain spiritual victories we cannot be given to the love of ease.

#### (c) **His courage and resolution (Josh. 8:5, 10)**

- (1) Although Israel was previously repulsed before Ai, Joshua was resolved to lead his army in person a second time (v. 5).

(2) Being himself also an elder, he took the elders of Israel with him to make this attack on Ai (v. 10). It conveyed the idea that it was more like a judgment upon Ai and fight them as enemies.

(d) **His caution and consideration (Josh 8:13)**

*Josh. 8:13 NKJV: "... Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley."*

(1) Joshua was especially near his people during this crucial time in trying to regain victory. The people needed to know he was near and they needed to fellowship his leadership.

(2) Details of what he did are not noted in the account (Josh. 8:13).

- Most likely he reviewed details of the attack with the respective leaders, making sure he covered everything.
- When they arrived on the battlefield the next morning, they were filled with a holy optimism.

(3) He most likely spent some time alone with God in prayer for a blessing upon their assignment and he didn't seek in vain!

(4) If we will regain and maintain victory, we must abide in Jesus and follow Him, He is our Savior (our Joshua). He is always near us and remains a present help in any situation (Psa. 46:1), He always fights our battles and in Him we are conquerors (Isa. 54:17; Psa. 34:17; 138:7; etc.)

(e) **His constancy and perseverance (Josh. 8:18)**

*Josh. 8:18 KJV: "And Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand toward the city."*

(1) His spear was almost as fatal and dreadful to the enemies of Israel as the rod of Moses was to the Egyptians (Ex. 4:2-3, 17; 14:16: etc.).

(2) Once the battle commenced Joshua didn't withdraw his hand until the enemy was totally destroyed (Josh. 8:26)

(3) His hand in fighting was like Moses' hands were held up for the duration of the battle until the Amalekites were destroyed (Ex. 17:8-14).

(4) We are in warfare and those who have stretched out their hands against the enemies must never be withdrawn; let us put on the whole armor and stand (Eph. 6:10-18).

(5) Jesus Christ came to earth to secure man's redemption (Luke 19:10; 1 John 3:8-9; etc.) and despite all the challenges, especially at the very dark hour in the Garden, for our Savior, there was no withdrawal (Matt. 26:30-46).

**All the way** to Calvary

He went for me, He went for me

**All the way** to Calvary He went for me

He died to set me free!

4. **Quality followers**

(a) It was encouraging to leadership to see the followers Joshua had; initially they pledged total obedience (Josh. 1:16); severe penalty for the disobedient and

rebellious (Josh. 1:18); and all along we have witnessed their faith, obedience, etc. faithfully lived. The only evident problem was with Achan and that was properly addressed.

(b) Joshua was there by divine appointment to guide them as God desired (theocratic government). Joshua ruled in the name of God (Josh. 8:8) and it was their responsibility to obey.

- They followed all instructions without murmuring and disputing.
- For them to flee as an army in retreat was somewhat a disgrace and perilous, nevertheless they obeyed.

(c) **What are some good qualities necessary in followers?**

*Below is a short list with limited comments:*

(1) Good and Wise Judgment

Followers must follow directions, which is obvious in our text, the Israelites discerned between what was right and what was wrong, what was required and what was not allowed, etc.

(2) Ethically Motivated and Directed

Good followers are good workers; they are diligent, motivated, committed, pay attention, make effort, etc.

(3) Competence

In order to follow, followers must be competent, possessing the necessary skills for their position and function accordingly.

(4) Honesty

We saw what dishonesty did to Israel because of one man. We are hereby referring to honor, virtue, uprightness, integrity, etc.

(5) Courage

This refers to strength of mind to venture, perseverance, to withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.

(6) Loyalty

A loyal person is someone who is faithful. This trait relies on strong allegiance and commitment.

(7) Enthusiasm

It is such a blessing to have followers with sincere eagerness (or fervor, warmth, zeal, etc.); enthusiasm is contagious and provides motivation in others.

(8) Obedience

Joshua was such an outstanding leader because he was a good follower; he obediently adhere to all orders received!! His leaders and potential leaders had him as an ideal role model, to the glory of God!!

## 5. **Practical Lesson: Victorious Life Can be Realized!!**

(a) Victory comes through obedience.

(1) Such obedience means doing exactly what God has instructed.

- (2) God gave Joshua the strategy to invade Ai and it was compulsory for him to obey.
  - (3) By obeying God, the momentum was regained by the Israelites, this was necessary to conquer the Promised Land of God.
  - (4) As seen in our text, Joshua obeyed God; we have observed the great pains he took to do exactly what God had instructed.
- (b) Likewise for us: the victorious life is achieved through obedience, by doing exactly what God has instructed.
- (1) Positively and unequivocally, obedience is an absolute essential for victory.
    - If we wish to conquer throughout life, we must obey God.
    - Throughout life there will be challenges:
      - If we are going to triumph, we must obey God!!
      - If we are going to be conquerors, we must obey God!!
      - If we are going to be victorious over the enemies that seek to defeat and destroy us, we must obey God!!
  - (2) The Word of God provides the teaching necessary for us to live according to God's will.
    - We must follow God's instructions for life and live exactly as God directs!!  
**Psa. 119:11 Amplified Bible**  
"Your Word have I laid in my heart, that I might not sin against You."
    - We must walk day by day obeying God and walk exactly as He directs.
    - Victory over the enemies of life comes only through obedience.  
**James 1:25 NKJV**  
"But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."
  - (3) See Matt. 7:21; John 15:10; Rev. 22:14; Ex. 19:5; Deut. 5:29.

### C. Resounding Victory Josh. 8:24-29

#### 1. Inflammatory Leader

*A few highlights regarding the king of Ai's hasty actions because he was overtaken by hate and rage.*

- (a) Obviously, no reconnaissance by Ai's security was done on the exterior of the city (v. 14).
  - (1) He knew of Israel's first attempt and that they would try again but he was not observant in regards to the areas around his city and that Israel was in hiding just behind his city overnight.
  - (2) Some believe the neglect was an example where God made men blind to their own interest, not realizing the imminent danger over their heads.
  - (3) Think on this statement: "**Those are most in danger who are least aware they are so.**"
- (b) He (the king of Ai) sent out all his soldiers in pursuit of Israel (v. 17).

- (1) No one was left to guard the city or to guard his retreat if such became necessary.
  - (2) **He was so inflamed with hate and the desire to obliterate Israel that he had no time to think rationally!**
  - (3) Seems as if he was saying: "I am going to put an end to these menacing Israelites with all that I have and nothing will stand in the way of doing so!!"
  - (4) His mind was made up to wipe out Israel and he even got help from Bethel. The irony is: both cities were left without soldiers (note carefully verse 17).
- (c) These leaders made it easy to enter both cities because they were not only emptied of soldiers but left wide opened (v. 17)
- (1) When Bethel joined in the battle we are not told. The only information that we have is that both Ai and Bethel were in pursuit of Israel (v. 17)
  - (2) They were hasty to destroy and as a result made themselves vulnerable for destruction.
  - (3) Pharaoh also thought that he was in a good position to pursue and destroy the people of God but only to the destruction of his army (Ex. 14, NB Vv. 26-31).
- (d) Little did the king of Ai and his accomplice know that Ai's previous victory was no guarantee of future victories over the people of God!!
- (1) God **allowed** that first victory by Ai as a scourge to chastise His people because of the accursed thing and the attitude of self-reliance.
    - That first defeat taught Israel needed lessons. Affliction can be a positive influence in teaching the reliability of what God says ... see Psa. 119:65-72, NB Vv.71-72.
    - Beloved, God's loving discipline brings forth eternal benefits if heed is taken and submission to His will is done (Heb. 12:7-11)
  - (2) Israel may have faltered because of Achan's transgression but the problem was properly addressed; Ai was facing a different Israel; the living and true God was with them and fights for them! The end result for this battle would not be the same as the first!!
- (e) **The results were overwhelming! Israel secured a resounding victory!!**  
*Let us look back just a little and note a few facts leading to this point:*
- (1) The armies of Ai and Bethel were in pursuit of the fleeing Israelite army and both cities were left wide open (v. 17).
  - (2) God had promised Joshua to be always with him (Josh. 1:9) and evidently that was so in this battle (Josh. 8:1-2).
    - God had given orders to Joshua to raise his spear as a signal to the soldiers in ambush (vv. 18-19).
    - As soon as Joshua lifted his spear (javelin), the ambush troops quickly captured the city of Ai and set it on fire (Vv. 18-19).
  - (3) The pursuers (soldiers from Ai and Bethel) were now being pursued and were caught between two sets of Israelite soldiers!

- It was now a bewildered situation with the city on fire and they had no way of escape.
- Most likely they realized their great mistake but such realization came too late, destruction was inevitable.
- God gave to His people, Israel, a resounding victory!!

## 2. **Inclusive** (Josh. 8:24)

(a) Israel conducted a comprehensive assault on Ai according to God's directives.

(1) The army of the enemy, Ai, was ravaged; no one survived or escaped (v. 22).

(2) The king of Ai was taken captive and brought to Joshua (v. 22) and was hanged in the evening (v. 29).

(3) The entire population was either killed in battle or executed, a total of twelve thousand.

- "Why Destroy the Canaanites?" was briefly discussed in Lesson 5 Page 18.
- They were all killed or executed because of their gross iniquity and pernicious way of life which was overflowing and they were at appoint beyond repentance; they were beyond turning to God.

### (b) **Symbol of God's Presence and Victory**

*The following quote from The Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible, is worth our attention:*

"The raised javelin had not only been the sign for the ambush party to attack, but it was a symbol of God's victorious presence with His dear people. It was the symbol of God's power in the midst of their conflict against the enemies who sought to destroy them. Joshua held the javelin up in the air until victory was fully achieved. Why did Joshua hold the javelin up in the air? For the same reason that Moses had been instructed to hold the rod of God in a former battle (Ex. 17:8-14). God needed to teach His people a striking lesson: that victory is through the LORD and through the LORD alone. The only hope for victory was the presence and power of God. No one could give His people victory over the enemies that were to confront them, no one except the LORD Himself. The javelin was a symbol to all God's people, a symbol that bore that witness and testimony to the power of... ..

(1) ...the power of God (2) ... the crying out to God (3) ... the authority of God (4) ... seeking God (5) ... prevailing prayer (6) ... appealing to God (7) ... intercession (8) ... trusting God." **(The rod in Moses' hand Ex. 17:9 insert mine)**

(c) Complete victory secured

(1) All of Ai was burnt as a permanent warning to the public.

(2) We have already referred to the king of Ai; note a few more details:

- He was hung and left exposed to the public.
- His end was not of a soldier but like a malefactor (criminal, a wrongdoer).
- His body was buried at the entering of the gate under a large memorial of stones.



- This memorial stands as a warning to all who oppose God (Josh. 8:29).

### 3. Incentive (Josh. 8:32)

(a) We are using “incentive” in reference to “encouragement.”

- (1) As noted, before, soldiers were not paid and the spoil from war was a means of support for them.
  - (2) Spoils from war also supplemented their food supplies. When Israel crossed the Jordan River the food (grains ... Josh. 5:11-12) they ate were left behind by the Canaanites who fled to other cities in fear of the Israelites.
- (b) In Jericho’s case there was a ban on that city but in this situation (Ai) they were allowed to take the spoils of war (Josh. 8:2).
- (c) It is believed that the spoil was brought together and distributed by leadership. It was not seized with irregularity or violence for God is the God of order and equity, and not confusion.

### 4. Invaluable Lessons Learnt by Joshua

*Joshua’s experience at Ai procured (secured) some extremely useful lessons to Joshua and in general to all God’s people.*

(a) **He learnt that failure could be turned into triumph.**

- (1) Failing upon their first attempt at attacking Ai was a devastating and humiliating experience.
- (2) He learnt that the secret was to do God’s work God’s way.

(b) **He learnt afresh that he was entirely dependent upon the LORD.**

- (1) It was the same lesson that Jesus Christ later impressed upon His followers.
  - He directed them to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49).
  - Only after receiving His presence would they be able to go into all the world and be witnesses (Acts 1:4-8).
- (2) The same principle applied as related to the situation with Achan’s transgression and its adverse effects.
  - This was an urgent matter to be addressed without which normalcy could not be restored.
  - God, as a result, told Joshua: “Up, sanctify the people, and say, sanctify yourselves.” (Josh. 7:13).
- (3) The people were to be wholly given over to God’s program, and by submitting to Him they would be assured of His presence. With such a sanctified people, Ai would be doomed.

(c) **Joshua also learnt the value of full participation (Josh. 8:1, 3, 5 ... note: “all the people.”).**

- (1) As we saw in regards to the failed attempt on Ai; the failure was experienced because of one man’s transgression. Israel was a corporate community and each person’s role was important.

- (2) Just as one person, out of harmony with God’s program, brought defeat; when all were of one heart and mind, the enemy perished!
- (d) **Another important lesson: Joshua knew the necessity to totally destroy what God considered to be abominable.**
- (1) Achan and his possessions needed to be removed, for he and the accursed items “short-circuited” God’s power.
- (2) We have also seen God’s emphasis on completely destroying the Canaanites and their cities so that they would not be around to lead astray the people of God. (*Unfortunately, after the death of Joshua, Israel adapted to the sinful ways of those who were not destroyed*).
- (3) Those in whose midst the LORD would dwell were to be holy people; He would not identify Himself with any other.
- (e) **Finally, it was learnt that there was no cover for sin that would hide it from God (Josh. 7:10-11)**
- (1) Sin cannot be hidden, or excused! God knows it all (Psa. 94:9-11; **Luke 8:17**; 12:2; John 15:22; etc.)
- (2) Sin, of every kind, must be eradicated (Josh. 7:24-26).
- The destruction of sin among the Israelites was not meant to be a temporary measure.
    - This has always been and always will be the principle upon which to maintain a relationship with god.
    - This is clearly taught in Scriptures, for examples in the Psalms
      - **Psa. 51:7 NKJV**  
“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”
      - Asap in his prayer for national deliverance (**Psa. 79**) asked to be purged because of God’s name ... **“For Your sake” (v. 9c)**.
  - Isaiah was given the assurance: **“Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin is purged” (Isa. 6:7b NKJV)**.
  - John the Baptist spoke of Christ’s mission as one in which He who would baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire would **“thoroughly purge His floor”** (Matt. 3:11-12).
- (3) **Sin must be routed out, gotten rid of, removed, dispelled, forsaken, and turned away from!!**
- Favor with God, access into God’s presence, comes by routing out sin from our lives.
  - Eph. 4:22-24; 1 Peter 2:11; Heb. 12:1; etc.

#### D. Rededication Josh. 8:30-35

##### INTRODUCTORY NOTES:

What Joshua did after the victory at Ai has been called into question by some scholars. To the human senses, Joshua’s actions didn’t make sense humanly and militarily. In their

assessment, because he was in the midst of war, it would have been normal for Joshua to move on to the next city and keep pushing in his conquest of the Promise Land. But what we have here is a situation that is of totally different nature; the camp of Israel is drawn into the field, not to engage the enemy, but to sacrifice, to hear the law read and join in the affirmation of the blessings and curses.

The distance they travelled for this rededication service was about thirty miles north of Ai. There are some who question the wisdom of travelling into enemy's territory. Obviously, Israel advanced to their destination without fear of attack. Israel was now known for its victories by the supernatural manifestation and power of the living and true God and any Canaanitish king would have been fearful to proceed alone to attack Israel.

- (a) Note the zeal of Israel for the service of God and His honor.
- (1) We **must not put off** our covenanting (promise, agreement, etc.) with God until we have settled in the world, nor must any business distract us from minding and diligently pursuing that which is most needful.
  - (2) Many have not taken the Word of God literally; they do go through the norm, get excited, can easily recite Scriptures, etc., but they fail to practically live it. One example is the lack of sincerity and consistently putting God first, where He always have the pre-eminence!! **Beloved, the way to prosper is to begin with God!! (Matt. 6:33).**
- (b) Israel's safe arrival at their destination (Shechem ... Josh. 8:30), teaches the care of God concerning His faithful servants and worshippers.
- (1) Although Israel was in enemy's territory, they were safe just as we saw in the case of Jacob when he was going up to Bethel to pay his vows: "... *the terror of God was upon the cities ...*" (**Gen. 35:5 ... read Gen. 34:1-35:7 for context**).
  - (2) **Beloved, when we are in the way of duty God takes us under His special protection (Psa. 91; etc.).**
- (c) Victory through rededication.
- (1) Victory comes through rededication, through a renewed commitment or covenant with God.
    - Israel had a great victory over their enemy.
    - They had gained some secure position in the Promised Land and were able to secure a safe campsite for all Israel.
  - (2) Israel had in place what was necessary for their wellbeing and as a result Joshua thought it was time for Israel to rededicate their lives to God, to renew their commitment and covenant with God.
- (d) Twice Moses had given orders for this solemn occasion ... (See Deut. 11:29-32 and Deut. 27, NB Vv. 1-8).
- (1) Now the time has come for rededication and renewal of the covenant.

- (2) You will also notice that Moses named the very place for this solemn occasion (Deut. 11:29-30).

(e) **The Principles of First Priorities:**

- (1) "Our capacity in life is always dependent on our spiritual capacity and orientation to the plan of God. Many Christians continually face defeat in their walk because they fail to take time to get alone with the Lord and reflect on Him and to put on their spiritual armor." (Victory at Ai ... Bible.org)
- (2) To many, Joshua was distracted from his military campaign by travelling 30 miles for a time of worship. Many of us know that nothing comes before being with God . . . reminds us of the hymn: "**Take Time to Be Holy**"

Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;  
Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word.  
Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,  
**Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.**

**Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;**  
**Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone.**  
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;  
Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.

**PLEASE NOTE: This victory at Ai means completion of the "Central Campaign in the conquest of the Promised Land."**

See also a brief listing of the Campaigns Conducted to conquer Canaan ... Lesson 5 Page 2.

**We can also summarize as follows:**

1. Preparation for Conquering the Promised Land Josh. 1-5
2. The conquest of the Promised Land Josh. 6-12
  - (a) The Central Campaign Josh. 6-8
  - (b) The Southern Campaign Josh. 9-10
  - (c) The Northern Campaign Josh. 11-12

**The Rededication Josh. 8:30-35**

**Josh. 8:30, 32, 34 ESV**

"At that time Joshua built an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal ... .. and there, in the presence of the people of Israel he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written ... .. And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law ... .."

1. **Raised an Altar** (Josh. 8:30-31)
  - (a) Joshua built an altar to **the LORD God** on Mount Ebal (v. 30)

- (1) This was in compliance with Moses command (Deut. 27:1-28:68; NB 27:5-7).
- The altar was a token of their dedication of themselves to God.
  - Note in Josh. 8:30: "... **the LORD God of Israel ...**"
    - The altar seems to be indicating and emphasizing to everyone that hereafter no other God will be worshipped in Canaan.
    - The new occupants, the Israelites, of Canaan brought the worship of the living and true God with them and they would recognize no other gods!!
- (2) The altar was built on Mount Ebal (v. 30)
- Mount Ebal was the mount that symbolize cursing (Deut. 11:29; 27:13-26)
  - We are all aware of the fact that because of one man all men are inherently sinful because of his depraved nature (Psa. 51:5; Rom. 5:12). However, by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ we are redeemed from the curse of the law (**Gal. 3:13**; 4:1-5; etc.).
- (3) The altar was made of uncut stones (Josh. 8:31)
- This was specifically a requirement stipulated by God (Ex. 20:25).
    - No tool was to be used in building Altars to the LORD.
    - This was a symbol that all offerings made to God were to be kept pure from contamination.
      - Man is sinful, depraved and therefore he can offer nothing that is acceptable to God in his sinful state.
      - Man is not saved by his own efforts and works; consequently, man has to approach God through the blood of the substitute sacrifice (Gal. 3:10-14; Eph. 2:8-10).
      - **The construction of the altar with uncut stones also teaches: "No fanfare, nothing high-flown, nothing extravagant, etc. . . .**  
*Nothing in my hands I bring  
 Simply to Thy cross I cling;  
 Naked, come to Thee for dress,  
 Helpless, look to Thee for grace,  
 Foul, I to the fountain fly,  
 Wash me, Savior, or I die.*
  - The following is a partial quote by Warren W. Wiersbe:  
 "... God asked for a simple stone altar, not one that was designed and decorated by human hands, 'that no flesh should glory in His presence' (1 Cor. 1:29). **It's not the beauty the beauty of man-made religion that gives forgiveness, but the blood on the altar (Lev. 17:11)."**
- (4) The First Altar in Canaan/the Promise of the Promised Land (*Briefly Noted*)
- The first altar erected to the living and true God in Canaan was done by Abraham (Gen. 12:6-7).
  - It was there that God promised Canaan to Abram (Abraham): "**Unto thy seed will I give this land**" (**Gen. 12:7**).

- It was a promise not fulfilled in the days of Abraham, nor Moses, nor Joshua.

**Heb. 11:39 NKJV**

“... these all having obtained a good testimony through faith did not receive the promise.”

- All this time the promise was in process of being fulfilled; the promise was on the way.
- God’s promise to Abraham would not be completely fulfilled in the scope (area) of any one person’s life.
- This we do know that God is not slack concerning His promises (2 Peter 3:9) and this we also recognize:

**1 Cor. 2:9 KJV**

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,”

- (b) In the Altar Worker’s Training Manual, I did a brief presentation on “What is The Altar?” ... Lesson 1, Pages 1-3.

*The following are some highlights from this presentation. We noted two facts about the altar:*

**(1) The Altar is a Place of Sacrifice.**

- Our altars today are not the places where lambs and bulls are slaughtered for sins because Jesus Christ, Himself, provided for that need (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7-8; etc.).
- The altars (in our local churches) are and should be the place where people give up what is important to them so that God might be able to make them the people, He intended them to be from the beginning.
- **The ultimate objective is for people to leave the old sinful nature in exchange for a new life in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). If we do not see this happening then our altars are not altars.**

**(2) The Altar is Where We Meet God.**

- Churches are routinely referred to as the “House of God” and we think of this in terms of God “owning our churches.”
- But the altar, in its role as a tabernacle or tent, is the “home of God” where He lives and where we can meet Him.
- **The glorious reality is, through Jesus Christ, while the designated areas, referred to as altars are within our church buildings, we have free access to God anytime and anywhere!! (Eph. 2:14-18, NB v. 18; 3:12; Heb. 4:14-16, NB v. 16; 10:19-23, NB v. 19).**

- (c) As we continue with the account in Shechem (Josh. 8:30-35), you will observe the careful attention given to the Mosaic instructions.

**Josh. 8:13b NKJV**

“And they offered on it burnt offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offering.”

(1) They offered Burnt Offering

- The Burnt Offering secured atonement or reconciliation with God through the substitute offering.
- The sacrifice of Burnt Offering was totally consumed by fire.
  - This was a symbol that sacrifice paid the full ransom to free the believer from sin and death.
  - The sacrifice bore the full punishment of God’s justice and judgment that was due the sinner.
- See Lev. 1:1-17.

(2) They offered Peace Offering

- The Peace Offering or Fellowship Offering was freewill offering that provided the way to grow in peace and fellowship with God.
- The sacrifice was placed on top of the Burnt Offering.
  - Selected portions were used for the sacrifice and the remainder of the animal belonged to the person who offered the sacrifice.
  - The person would eat his portion with his family and any guest, **all of whom had to be in state of ritual purity.**
- Placing the Peace Offering on top of the Burnt Offering symbolized that the peace and fellowship of God are based upon the atonement and being reconciled with God.
- See Lev. 3:1-17

2. **Recognizing the Law** (Josh. 8:33)

(a) Large stones were whitewashed and on them Joshua wrote the Law of Moses (Deut. 27:2-4, 8).

- (1) Just exactly what was written has not been stated in our text. However, the Law included both the Ten Commandments and the blessings and curses, so both were probably written on these whitewashed stones.
- (2) Israel was a covenant people . . . they received the Law from God and they must abide by it.

(b) This writing of the law was done in the presence of all Israel.

- (1) It was written so all may see what they have consented to abide by.
- (2) Being written on these stones was a testimony to future generations of God’s goodness in giving them such laws.
- (3) It would be a strong testimony against them if they disobeyed them.

(c) It is a grand and glorious privilege to have the law of God in writing and it is very special to have such written law exposed publicly in a known tongue, that it may be seen and read of all men.

3. **Reading the Law** (Josh. 8:34-35)

(a) **Introductory Notes**

- (1) The area for this great solemn occasion (Josh. 8:30-35) was an ideal location.

- It was situated between these two mountains (Gerizim and Ebal) and the valley area was described as a natural amphitheater.
  - F. B. Myers describes the area as:
    - Where the mountains are hallowed out “and the limestone stratum is broken into succession of ledges so as to **present the appearance** of a series of regular benches.”  
(*“stratum”: a layer of rocks in the ground*)
    - He also states, it is “a natural amphitheater ... .. capable of containing a vast audience of people.”
  - **The acoustical advantage was another major contributor to the outstanding features.** It has been stated that one person standing on one of the mountains could be easily heard by someone standing on the other mountain.
- (2) The symbolic lessons of the two mountains (Josh. 8:33-34)
- Mount Gerizim stood for blessings (Deut. 27:11-12) and Mount Ebal for curses (Deut. 27:13-26). We also have a detailed account in Deut. 28, Blessings for obedience (Vv. 1-14) and curses for disobedience (Vv. 15-68).
  - It was dependent on Israel as to their final outcome. Depending how they lived would determine which of these conditions they would experience.
  - Israel already had an object lesson in regards to this reality.
    - The victory at Jericho was due for one aspect because of their obedience.
    - Their first assault on Ai was a disaster because of disobedience.
    - Their second assault on Ai was a success because of their renewed commitment to obey.
    - Their choices will determine their future condition.
  - To this day, God allows man to exercise his will to choose.
    - Jesus ends His sermon on the Mount with a challenge to His listeners to choose (Matt. 7:13-29, NB Vv. 13-14).
    - God’s invitation for salvation is conditioned on man’s response (Isa. 55:1-7; Rev. 22:17; etc.). Beloved, choices determine one’s destiny!!
- (b) **Comprehensive Participation** (Josh. 8:33)
- (1) The greatest prince was not excused from this solemn service.
- The elders, officers and judges were not above the jurisdiction (authority, control, etc.) of the law.
  - This fact applies to the curses; if they violated in anyway, they would be judged accordingly.
  - By their presence they were acknowledging their awareness of the requirements of the law and the results of either obeying or disobeying.
- (2) Absolutely, no one was exempted from the service!! All campers were required to attend.



- This include the poorest stranger among them ... attendance was mandatory!!
  - Whether they were naturalized or born among the Israelites, they were taken into the covenant.
- (3) Based on this act, we can see the importance of **“Christian Education.”**
- There is an unbalanced approach today in regards to “Christian Education” . . . however, we do not have time for a discussion.
  - Christian Education is so very important because it deals with eternal matters and should be a concern for all families and all Christian sources.
    - In some situations, interest is taken only by the wife or sometimes by the husband but it is a need for the entire family
    - On a wide scale **some** children are sent to church with no home support and in many situations the children often give up and fade away from God and His cause.
    - Etc.
    - Josh. 24:15, must become a reality, one that is literally lived, and not just a wonderful thought for a wall plaque or to be verbally recited.
  - Note carefully the first three words in Josh. 8:33: **“And all Israel ...”**
  - There is a need for a universal response in joining Andrea Crouch in the song: **Take Me Back.**
- The Refrain:
- Take me back, take me back dear Lord,  
 To the place where I first receive you  
 Take me back, take me back dear Lord where I  
 First believed.
- Back to the altar of sacrifice.
  - Back to the “Family Altar.”
  - Back to spending time in God’s Word (Acts 17:11; etc.); spending quality time in His presence (Luke 19:1; etc.)
  - Back to sincerely loving Him with OUR ALL (Matt. 22:37-40; etc.) putting Him FIRST (Matt. 6:33; etc.)
  - Etc.
  - Back! Back!! Back to a **Renewed Relationship!!”**
- (c) The tribes and strangers were positioned uniformly (Josh. 8:33)
- (1) This was done as commanded by Moses; note Deut. 27:12-13.
- (2) Joshua divided and positioned all the Israelites for the special service of rededication and covenant renewal.
- This included all the citizens and foreigners, both adults and children.
  - Half of the people were at the foot of Mount Gerizim and the other half at the foot of Mount Ebal.
  - It is believed that these groups were placed on some elevation, enabling them to look down upon the Ark and the priests who had been placed in the valley between the two groups.

(d) The Law read to the people.

- (1) This Law read to the people included the Ten Commandments and the blessings and cursings.
- (2) This solemn reading of the Law was to be done once every seven years to all the people of Israel (Deut. 31:7-13, NB Vv. 10-11).
- (3) It was required that every word should be read, omitting nothing, including the minutest precept (doctrine, rule, etc.).
- (4) Such repetition (reading every seven years) was to ensure that Israel might not allow the Law to be ignored or forgotten.
- (5) Having everyone present at this solemn gathering teaches us a few lessons, for example:

- Leaders (husbands) of the family should bring their wives and children to the solemn assemblies for worship.

**Deut. 6:6-7 ESV**

“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

- All that are capable of learning must be taught the Word of God.

**Matt. 28:20a Amplified Bible**

“Teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you ...”

- Strangers, those not yet belonging to the household of faith should be reached out to, invite them, expose them to the grand opportunity that they may taste and see that God is good!!

**Luke 14:23 Amplified Bible**

“Then the master said to the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges and urge and constrain [them] to yield and come in, so that my house may be filled.”

**Read:** Luke 14:15-24; Psa. 34:8; etc.

**2 Tim. 2:15**

**KJV**

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

**Amplified Bible**

“Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.”

## LESSON 7 REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What were two important lessons learnt by the failed attempt on Ai?

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2. Complete by choosing the correct answer:

“God is not content with our doing what is \_\_\_\_\_ . He wants us to do what is right all the time.”

- (a) wrong and be sorry sometimes.
- (b) pleasant, eye-catching all the time.
- (c) right some of the time.
- (d) wrong some of the time.

3. The remains of Achan, his family and all possessions were burnt; what did the burning symbolized?

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4. How can anyone be victorious amidst all the challenges of life?

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5. Complete the following:  
 "Achan's sin was an (a) \_\_\_\_\_ to God and a (b) \_\_\_\_\_  
 experience for Israel because the (c) \_\_\_\_\_ and (d) \_\_\_\_\_  
 of God was (e) \_\_\_\_\_ until the (f) \_\_\_\_\_ was  
 (g) \_\_\_\_\_ addressed."

6. Complete by choosing the correct answer:  
 "\_\_\_\_\_ the  
 Church (Universal) weakens the hands and dampens the spirit of leaders and members  
 and hinders the work of God far more than any external opposition."

- (a) Corruption corrected and taken out
- (b) Corruption and disruption within
- (c) Corruption and disruption outside
- (d) Unity and hard work within

7. After addressing Achan's transgression, what was the first key factor needed by Israel in order to regain victory?

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8. If the morale were low among Israel's army what would such mean in regards to regaining victory?

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9. Match the statements on the left with their correct references on the right:

STATEMENTS	CORRECT REFERENCES	JUMBLED REFERENCES
Blessings in the journey of life		Isa. 41:10
Supplies even in famine		Isa. 43:1-3
Protection in peril		1 Kings 17:13
Strength in weakness		2 Kings 6:16
Companionship in trial		Gen. 26:24

10. (a) How would you summarize Matt. 6:19-33? (b) Briefly explain the lesson taught in this reference.

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11. (a) Define "spoil" as used in Josh. 8:2. (b) What purpose did this practice serve?

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12. (a) Define "delayed gratification." (b) Briefly explain how this is applicable to the believer.

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13. In our lesson what two principles governed the distribution of war trophies?

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14. Complete by choosing the correct answer:

“Those who are entrusted with leadership responsibility need God to entrust within them the needed \_\_\_\_\_

- (a) directives to boldly deliver messages
- (b) directives how to evangelize effectively
- (c) directives to do His will
- (d) directives to manipulate and smile

15. **Briefly** list the qualities of a brave leader exemplified in Josh. 8 ... list the respective verses.

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16. In Josh. 8:13, we noted that Joshua spent the night, before the second assault on Ai with his soldiers. In what way did this act exemplify caution and consideration?

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17. (a) Answer True or False. (b) Explain your answer.

“Joshua raised his spear as a signal to the soldiers in ambush, and then withdrew his hand so he could help with fighting the enemy.

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18. List at least eight good qualities necessary in followers.

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19. In his response to the Israelites second attack, in what way did the king of Ai, along with his soldiers, pursued the fleeing Israelites without thinking logically?

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20. Briefly explain how Israel's second assault on Ai was comprehensive in its scope and result.

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21. Briefly explain how Joshua's raised javelin (spear) was symbolic.

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22. As a result of both attacks on Ai, what valuable lessons did Joshua learned, which are applicable to all believers (Briefly)?

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23. Complete by choosing the correct answer:

“Those in whose midst the LORD would dwell \_\_\_\_\_; He would not identify Himself with any other.”

- (a) Were to be humanly wise
- (b) Were to be unsteady believers
- (c) Were to be outwardly impressive
- (d) Were to be holy people

24. What is a mandatory requirement necessary to have favor with God and access into His presence?

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25. Complete the following:

“Our capacity in life is always (a) \_\_\_\_\_ on our spiritual  
 (b) \_\_\_\_\_ and (c) \_\_\_\_\_ to the plan of God.  
 Many Christians continually face (d) \_\_\_\_\_ in their walk because  
 they (e) \_\_\_\_\_ to take time to get (f) \_\_\_\_\_ with the Lord  
 and (g) \_\_\_\_\_ on Him and to put on their spiritual (h) \_\_\_\_\_”

26. Complete the following (*based on Josh. 8:30*):

“Building an altar at Mount Ebal was a token of their \_\_\_\_\_.”



27. In Shechem Israel congregated between two mountains; name these mountains and what each symbolized.

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28. The altar erected in Mt. Ebal was made of “uncut stones.” (a) Why did they not use carved stones? (b) Of what was this symbolic?

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29. Briefly explain the two types of offerings offered on Mount Ebal (Josh. 8:30-31).

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30. Joshua wrote the Law on large rocks in Mount Ebal (Josh. 8:33). (a) What was done to make the inscription possible? (b) In what way was this inscription of the Law on these rocks significant?

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