

**“Rematch at Ai”
Joshua chapter 8
Scripture Ref:**

1. **PAY ATTENTION: What was revealed....**
 - a. ... about God?
 - b. ... about yourself?
 - c. How will you apply what you learned?
2. **In our last study, we saw a very clear example of how sin in the camp caused a huge defeat for the nation.**
 - a. Where one man, Achan, disobeyed God, and that sin, the taking of things that were set apart for God, and hiding those things...
 - b. Caused the defeat of Israel at the hands of a smaller and weaker people.
3. **What happened? Their sin found them out, and God had Joshua bring out the sin the camp, and deal with it in a very definitive way!**
 - a. I am quite sure that after that scene at the Valley of Achor, the Israelites had a new respect for obedience to God!
4. **God was teaching them to seek HIM for everything – and then to REPENT...**

8:1 Now **the LORD said** to Joshua: "**Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed**; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. 2 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 it."

5. **Key #1 – “The Lord said” – are we listening to God?**
6. **Key #2 – “Do not be afraid”, if God has give us the command, we can move forward without fear!**
7. **They were allowed to take the spoil of this battle – how foolish Achan’s sin seems now!**
 - a. What’s Gods is Gods –
 - b. God wants to bless us, but we must trust His timing and provision

Joshua sets and Ambush

3 **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. 4 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. 5 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 at the first, that we shall flee before them. 6 For they will come out after us till we have drawn them from the city, for they will say, 'They are fleeing before us as at the first.' Therefore we will flee before them. 7 Then you shall rise from the ambush and seize the city, for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. 8 And it will be, when you have taken the city, that you shall set the city on fire. According to the commandment of the LORD you shall do. See, I have commanded you."

9 Joshua therefore sent them out; and they went to lie in ambush, and stayed between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai; but Joshua lodged that night among the people. 10 Then **Joshua rose up early** in the morning and mustered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. 11 And all the people of war who were with him went up and drew near; and they came before the city and camped on the **north side of Ai**. Now a valley lay between them and Ai. 12 So he took about **five thousand men** and set them in **ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city**. 13 And when they had set the people, all the army that was on the north of the city, and its rear guard on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley.

8. Joshua directed an incredible strategy...

- a. **He set a large force in the woods to the west, between Bethel and Ai**
- b. **He then drew his other forces towards the city from the north, split them up again, and waited in the valley in plain sight of the city**

14 Now it happened, when the king of Ai saw it, that the men of the city hurried and rose early and went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at an appointed place before the plain. But he did not know that there was an ambush against him behind the city. 15 And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. 16 So all the people who were in Ai were called together to pursue them. And they pursued Joshua and were drawn away from the city. 17 There was **not a man left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel**. So they left the city open and pursued Israel.

9. So in the morning, the king look out, sees a group of fighters about the same size as they defeated last time

- a. **Probably thinks, "we need to finish them off this time"**
- b. **So they all go out to do battle, the men from Ai and Bethel, and it is a fatal mistake.**

18 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Stretch out the spear that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand." And Joshua stretched out the spear that was in his hand toward the city. 19 So those in ambush arose quickly out of their place; they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand, and they entered

the city and took it, and hurried to set the city on fire. 20 And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and behold, the smoke of the city ascended to heaven. So they had no power to flee this way or that way, and the people who had fled to the wilderness turned back on the pursuers.

10. Imagine the dismay when they turned back to see their city burning... all the fight would have left them

a. And at this point Joshua turns on his attackers

21 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. 22 Then the others came out of the city against them; so they were caught in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side. And they struck them down, so that they let none of them remain or escape. 23 But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.

24 And it came to pass when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness where they pursued them, and when they all had fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword. 25 So it was that all who fell that day, both men and women, were twelve thousand -- all the people of Ai. 26 For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. 27 Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which He had commanded Joshua. 28 So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day. 29 And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening. And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his corpse down from the tree, cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raise over it a great heap of stones that remains to this day.

11. Look at the difference between what happened here, and what happened the first time they came here.

- a. Total turnaround... what was the difference?**
- b. Same people, same leaders...**
- c. One difference – they were right before God.**
- d. And if there is something that is going wrong in our life, are we asking God... “what about me?”**

12. See we have to be careful that we do not start thinking...

- a. When we take a big city like thus...**
- b. A small city like thus...**
- c. NO – whatever our situation – we SEEK THE LORD**

13. Discussion last night – the effects of sin – you cannot escape them!

- a. **I have come to the conclusion that in life, it is much better to go ahead and obey God, and thus live in victory...**
- b. **Than to try and compromise, and end up being defeated!**

14. God is showing them – “I can give you a total and complete victory in your life....

- a. **The key - OBEDIANCE**

30 Now Joshua built an altar to the LORD God of Israel in Mount Ebal, 31 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 of whole stones over which no man has wielded an iron tool." And they offered on it burnt offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. 32 And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. 33 Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them were in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. 34 And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. 35 There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.

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