

# A Study in the Book of Joshua



*By Cecilia Perh*



Entrusting the Word  
to the Faithful



# Overview of Joshua

**Joshua 1-5**  
**PREPARING**

**Joshua 6-12**  
**CONQUERING**

**Joshua 13-24**  
**DIVIDING**

**The Calling and  
Responsibility of  
Godly Leadership**

**The Implementation  
of God's Strategy  
for Victory**

**The Accountability to  
Complete God's  
Mission**

## Developing God's People

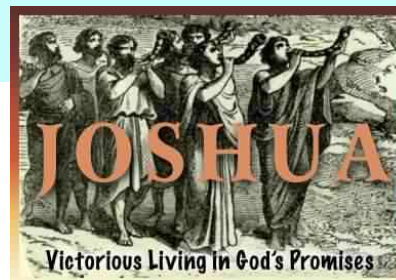
Success is determined by one's ability to become and remain sensitive to the Lord's authority and methods.

## Understanding God's Strategy

Victory only arises when one fully understands temptation and wholly depends upon the Lord's means for deliverance.

## Grasping God's Good Purposes

God's full favor is found only when one both understands and diligently seeks God's complete purposes.



[http://www-foundationsforfreedom.net/Article/Bible/OT/OT\\_Historical/Joshua/Joshua00\\_Overview.gif](http://www-foundationsforfreedom.net/Article/Bible/OT/OT_Historical/Joshua/Joshua00_Overview.gif)

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# MOBILIZING GOD'S PEOPLE FOR VICTORY

## Book of Joshua

Paul J. Bucknell



**Purpose of Joshua** • God's good purposes can always be gloriously fulfilled when we faithfully trust and obey Him.

### DEVELOPING GOD'S PEOPLE

THE CALLING AND RESPONSIBILITY OF GODLY LEADERSHIP

*PREPARING*

Joshua 1-5

### UNDERSTANDING GOD'S STRATEGY

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOD'S STRATEGY FOR VICTORY

*CONQUERING*

Joshua 6-12

### GRASPING GOD'S GOOD PURPOSES

THE ACCOUNTABILITY TO COMPLETE GOD'S MISSION

*DIVIDING*

Joshua 13-24

1:1-5	The Mission
1:1-9	Developing Godly Leadership
1:10-18	Maximum Mobilization
1:12-18	The Battle Before the Conquest
2:1-24	God's Mysterious Ways
3:1-17	Signs & Wonders
4:1-24	Pauses #1: Forming Memories
5:1-9	Pauses #2: Our Step of Faith
5:10-12	Pauses #3: Communing With God
5:13-15	Pause #4: Following God's Leader
6:1-27	God's First Victory at Jericho
7:1-26	A Battle with Sin
8:1-29	Recovering From Defeat
8:30-35	Delight in God's Torah
9:1-27	Falling For A Lie
10:1-43	The Battles Against the Kings
11:1-23	Responding Strategically
12:1-24	Gaining Momentum
13:1-13	Rules for Victorious Living
14:1-15:19	Caleb: A Man Willing to Fight
15:20-17:13	Fulfilling Our Obligations
17:12-18	Escaping From Fear's Grip
18:1-19:51	Dividing the Inheritance
20:1-9	Where Can I Run?
21:1-45	Care of God's Workers
22:1-34	For Good or For Bad
23:1-16	Passing the Torch
24:1-13	Truth or Fiction
24:14-33	Declaration of our Commitment

### BEING READIED FOR GOD'S WORK

Success is determined by one's ability to become and remain sensitive to the Lord's authority and methods.

### THE RECORD OF GREAT VICTORIES

Victory only arises when one fully understands temptation and wholly depends upon the Lord's means for deliverance.

### THE EVALUATION OF THE MISSION

God's full favor is found only when one both understands and diligently seeks God's complete purposes.

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# Conquest of the Promised Land

Invasion of Canaan					Conquest of Canaan							Division of Canaan							Conclusion				
Charge to Joshua	Spying out Jericho	Crossing the Jordan	Stones Set Up	Circumcision & Passover	Central Campaign			Southern Campaign		Northern Campaign		Special Allotments		Major Allotments				Special Provisions		Altar by the Jordan	Joshua's Farewell Speech	Covenant Renewed at Shechem	
					Fall of Jericho	Achan's Sin	Restoration	Gibeon Tricks Israel	Joshua's Long Day	Northern Conquests	Defeated Kings	Transjordan Tribes	Caleb	Judah	Ephraim	Manasseh	Benjamin	Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, Dan	Cities of Refuge				Levitical Cities
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1-5					6-12							13-19							20-24				
Preparation					Conquest							Inheritances							Consecration				
ACTION					ALLOCATION							APPEAL											
The Promised Land					Conflict and Conquest							Dividing the Land							Joshua's Farewell				
Possessing the Land					Partitioning the Land																		
7 years (50% of Joshua)					About 18 years (50% of Joshua)																		
<p style="text-align: center;">9 ½ Tribes on the West Side of the Jordan – CANAAN 2 ½ Tribes on the East Side of the Jordan – TRANSJORDAN</p>																							

**Author:** Joshua

**Date:** between 1400 & 1350BC

**Key Verses:** 1:2-3; 11:23; 24:14-15

**Key Words:** possess(-ion) [27x], land (158x), inheritance (57x), king(s) [115x]

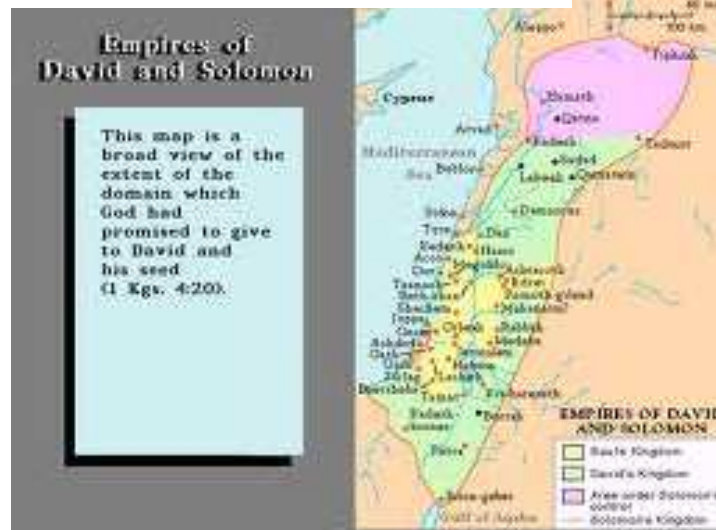
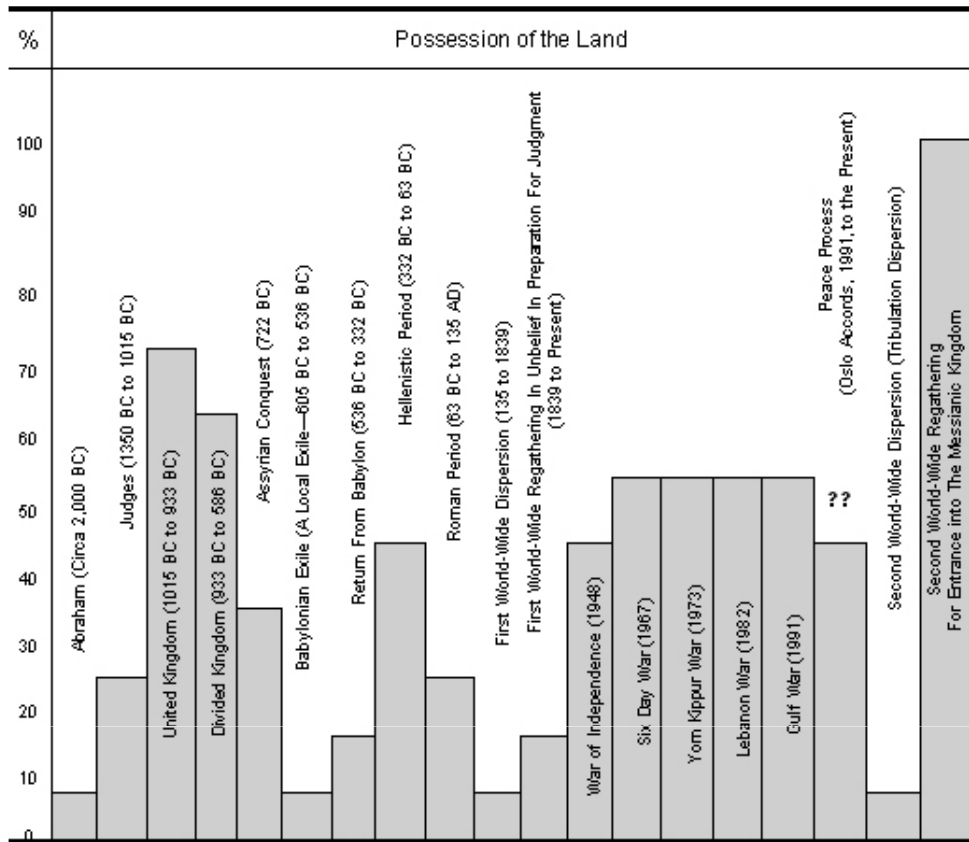
## Purpose of Writing:

- 1) To show how God fulfilled His promises by giving Israel the land promised to the forefathers.
- 2) To show how Joshua faithfully performed the work which had been entrusted to him by God.



**Three Altars**  
**Altar Memorial 4:7**  
**Altar Offering 8:30**  
**Altar Witness 22:34**





# The Book of Joshua

## Conquest of the Promised Land

### I. The Invasion of Canaan (1:1-5:12)

### II. The Conquest of Canaan (5:13-12:24)

#### A. Introduction: The Divine Commander (5:13-15)

#### B. The Central Campaign (chapters 6-8)

##### 1. The Conquest of Jericho (chapter 6)

##### 2. The Defeat at Ai (chapter 7)

##### 3. The Victory at Ai (chapter 8)

###### a. The Strategy (8:1-8)

###### b. The Battle (8:9-29)

###### c. The Aftermath (v30-35)

## The Strategy (v1-8)

<sup>1</sup>**Now** the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear or 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. <sup>2</sup>**And you shall do to Ai and its king just as you did to Jericho and its king; you shall take only its spoil and its cattle as plunder for yourselves. Set an ambush for the city behind it.**"

**BKC** - at this crucial time in Joshua's life it was good to be reminded and reassured that God was ready to lead if Joshua were ready to listen to His plan, which he was.

God's plan involved using all the fighting men of Israel. Though the primary cause of the defeat at Ai was Achan's sin, a secondary cause was underrating the enemy (cf. Jos\_7:3-4). That error would now be rectified. God said for Joshua to go up and attack Ai and He promised to turn the place of defeat into a place of victory.

**K&D** - עָלָה, to go up, is applied to the advance of an army against a hostile town, independently of the question whether the town was situated upon an eminence or not, as every town that had to be taken was looked upon as a height to be scaled, though as a fact in this instance the army had really to ascend from Jericho to Ai, which was situated up in the mountains

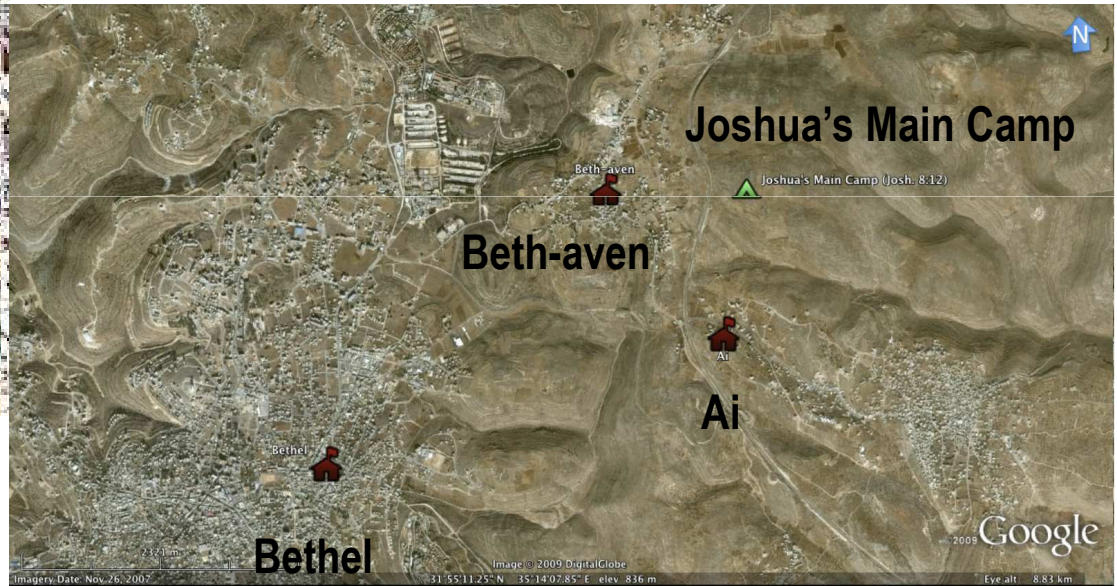
## The Defeat at Ai (chapter 7)



**View from North  
– Khirbet el-  
Maqatir is the Ai  
of Joshua's day,  
including the city**



**Desert Fortress**



## The Strategy (v1-8)

<sup>3</sup>**So Joshua rose with all the people of war to go up to Ai; and Joshua chose 30,000 men, valiant warriors, and sent them out at night.**

**K&D** - By “all the people of war” we are hardly to understand all the men out of the whole nation who were capable of bearing arms; but as only a third of these were contributed by the two tribes and a half to cross over into Canaan and take part in the war, the other tribes also are not likely to have levied more than a third, say about 160,000, which would form altogether an army of about 200,000 men. But even such an army as this seems out of all proportion to the size of Ai, with its 12,000 inhabitants (Jos\_8:25). On the other hand, however, we must bear in mind that the expression “*all the people of war*” **simply denotes the whole army**, in contrast with the advice of the spies that only a portion of the army should be sent (Jos\_7:3), so that we are not warranted in pressing the word “all” to absolutely; ...and also that this command of God was not given with reference to the conquest of Ai alone, but applied at the same time to the conquest of the whole land, which Joshua was not to attempt by sending out detachments only, but was to carry out with the whole of the force at his command.

## The Defeat at Ai (chapter 7)

## The Strategy (v1-8)

<sup>4</sup>And he commanded them, saying, "See, you are going to ambush the city from behind it. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready.

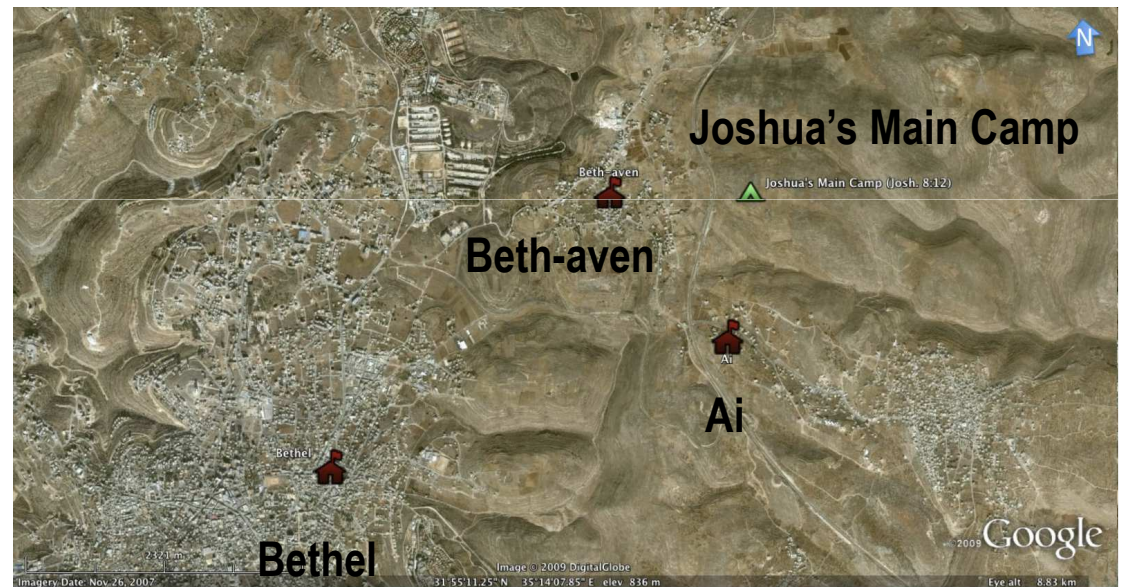
<sup>5</sup>**Then** I and all the people who are with me will approach the city. And it will come about **when** they come out to meet us **as** at the first, that we will flee before them. <sup>6</sup>And they will come out after us **until** we have drawn them away from the city, **for** they will say, 'They are fleeing before us **as** at the first.' **So** we will flee before them. <sup>7</sup>And you shall rise from your ambush and take possession of the city, for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. <sup>8</sup>**Then** it will be **when** you have seized the city, that you shall set the city on fire. You shall do it according to the word of the LORD. See, I have commanded you."

## The Defeat at Ai (chapter 7)

**K&D** - As the distance from Gilgal to Ai was about fifteen miles, and the road runs pretty straight in a north-westerly direction from Jericho through the Wady Faran, the detachment sent forward might easily accomplish the distance in a night, so as to arrive on the western side of Ai before the break of day. They were then to hold themselves in readiness to fight. He (Joshua) himself would approach the town with the people of war that remained with him; and if the inhabitants of Ai should come out against him as they did before, they would flee before them till they had drawn them quite away from their town (Jos 8:5)



**Desert Fortress**



# The Book of Joshua

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###### b. The Battle (8:9-29)

###### c. The Aftermath (v30-35)

## The Battle (v9-29)

<sup>9</sup>**So** Joshua sent them away, and they went to the place of ambush and remained between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai; **but** Joshua spent **that night** among the people. <sup>10</sup>**Now** Joshua rose **early in the morning** and **mustered the people**, and **he** went up **with the elders of Israel** before the people to Ai.

**JFB - 8:10 Joshua ... numbered the people** - that is, the detachment of liars-in-wait; he did this, to be furnished with clear evidence afterwards, that the work had been done without any loss of men, whereby the people's confidence in God would be strengthened and encouragement given them to prosecute the war of invasion with vigor.  
**he and the elders of Israel** - the chief magistrates and rulers, whose presence and official authority were necessary to ensure that the cattle and spoil of the city might be equally divided between the combatants and the rest of the people (Num\_31:27) - a military rule in Israel, that would have been very liable to be infringed, if an excited soldiery, eager for booty, had been left to their own will.

## The Defeat at Ai (chapter 7)

## The Battle (v9-29)

<sup>11</sup>**Then** all the people of war who were with him went up and drew near and arrived in front of the city, and camped on the north side of Ai. **Now there** was a valley between him and Ai. <sup>12</sup>And he took about 5,000 men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city. <sup>13</sup>**So** they stationed the people, all the army that was on the north side of the city, and its rear guard on the west side of the city, and **Joshua spent that night in the midst of the valley.**

## The Defeat at Ai (chapter 7)

**JFB** Beth-el, though lying quite near in the direction of west by north, cannot be seen from Tell-el-hajar; two rocky heights rise between both places, in the wady El-Murogede, just as the laying of an ambush to the west of Ai would require [Van De Velde; Robinson].



**JFB - 8:13** Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley - The deep and steep-sided glen to the north of Tell-el-hajar, into which one looks down from the tell, fully agrees with this account [Van De Velde]. Joshua himself took up his position on the north side of "the ravine" - the deep chasm of the wady El-Murogede; "that night" - means, while it was dark, probably after midnight, or very early in the morning (Joh\_20:1). The king of Ai, in the early dawn, rouses his slumbering subjects and makes a hasty sally with all his people who were capable of bearing arms, once more to surprise and annihilate them.

## The Battle (v9-29)

<sup>14</sup>And it came about **when** the king of Ai saw *it*, that the men of the city hurried and rose up **early** and went out to meet Israel in battle, he and all his people **at the appointed place before the desert plain**. **But** he did not know that *there was* an ambush against him behind the city.

**KJV - at a time appointed, before the plain;**

**JFB - 8:14 at a time appointed** - either an hour concocted between the king and people of Ai and those of Beth-el, who were confederates in this enterprise, or perhaps they had fixed on the same time of day, as they had fought successfully against Israel on the former occasion, deeming it a lucky hour (Jdg\_20:38).

**but he wist not that there were liers in ambush against him behind the city** - It is evident that this king and his subjects were little experienced in war; otherwise they would have sent out scouts to reconnoiter the neighborhood; at all events, they would not have left their town wholly unprotected and open. **Perhaps an ambuscade may have been a war stratagem hitherto unknown in that country, and among that people.**

## The Defeat at Ai (chapter 7)

**15** And Joshua and all Israel pretended to be beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. **16** And all the people who were in the city were called together to pursue them, and they pursued Joshua, and were drawn away from the city. **17** **So** not a man was left in Ai or Bethel who had not gone out after Israel, and they left the city unguarded and pursued Israel.



**Jos 8:16-17** - And all the people in the town were called together to pursue the Israelites, and were drawn away from the town, so that not a man, i.e., not a single soldier who could take part in the pursuit, remained either in Ai or the neighbouring town of Bethel, and the town stood open behind them. It is evident from Jos\_8:17 that the inhabitants of Bethel, which was about three hours' journey from Ai, took part in the battle, probably in consequence of a treaty which the king of Ai had made with them in the expectation of a renewed and still stronger attack on the part of the Israelites. Nothing further is known upon this point; nor can anything be inferred from the fact that the king of Bethel is included in the list of the kings slain by Joshua (Jos\_12:16). Consequently, we cannot decide whether the Bethelites came to the help of the Aites for the first time on the day of the battle itself, or, what is more probable, had already sent men to Ai, to help to repulse the expected attack of the Israelites upon that town.

**Joshua 8:15-17** - Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them - the pretended flight in the direction of the wilderness; that is, southeast, into the Ghor, the desert valley of the Jordan, decoyed all the inhabitants of Ai out of the city, while the people of Beth-el hastened to participate in the expected victory. It is supposed by some, from "the city," and not "cities," being spoken of, that the effective force of Beth-el had been concentrated in Ai, as the two places were closely contiguous, and Ai the larger of the two. (See Jos\_12:9). It may be remarked, however, that the words, "or Beth-el," are not in the Septuagint, and are rejected by some eminent scholars, as an interpolation not found in the most ancient manuscripts.

**Keil and Delitzsch**

**Jamieson, Fausset & Brown**

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## The Battle (v9-29)

<sup>18</sup>**Then** the LORD said to Joshua, "Stretch out the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai, **for I will give it into your hand.**" **So** Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city. <sup>19</sup>And the *men in* ambush rose quickly from their place, and **when** he had stretched out his hand, they ran and entered the city and captured it; and they **quickly** set the city on fire. <sup>20</sup>**When** the men of Ai turned back and looked, **behold**, the smoke of the city ascended to the sky, and they had no place to flee this way or that, **for** the people who had been fleeing to the wilderness turned against the pursuers.

## The Defeat at Ai (chapter 7)

**JFB - 8:18-25 Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand toward the city - The uplifted spear had probably a flag, or streamer on it, to render it the more conspicuous from the height where he stood. At the sight of this understood signal the ambush nearest the city, informed by their scouts, made a sudden rush and took possession of the city, telegraphing to their brethren by raising a smoke from the walls. Upon seeing this, the main body, who had been feigning a flight, turned round at the head of the pass upon their pursuers, while the twenty-five thousand issuing from their ambuscade, fell back upon their rear. The Ai-ites surprised, looked back, and found their situation now desperate.**

### Ambush Force (5K men)



## The Battle (v9-29)

<sup>21</sup>**When** Joshua and all Israel saw that the *men in* ambush had captured the city and that the smoke of the city ascended, they turned back and slew the men of Ai. <sup>22</sup>And the others came out from the city to encounter them, **so that** they were *trapped* in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side; and they slew them **until** no one was left of those who survived or escaped. <sup>23</sup>**But** they took alive the king of Ai and brought him to Joshua. <sup>24</sup>**Now** it came about **when** Israel had finished killing all the inhabitants of Ai in the field in the wilderness where they pursued them, and all of them were fallen by the edge of the sword **until** they were destroyed, **then** all Israel returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword. <sup>25</sup>And all who fell **that day**, both men and women, were 12,000 – all the people of Ai. <sup>26</sup>**For** Joshua did not withdraw his hand with which he stretched out the javelin **until** he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.

## The Defeat at Ai (chapter 7)

## The Battle (v9-29)

<sup>27</sup> Israel took only the cattle and the spoil of that city **as** plunder for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which He had commanded Joshua. <sup>28</sup> **So** Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap **forever**, a desolation **until this day**. <sup>29</sup> And he hanged the king of Ai on a tree **until evening**; and **at sunset** Joshua gave command and they took his body down from the tree, and threw it at the entrance of the city gate, and raised over it a great heap of stones *that stands to this day*.

**BKC** - Thus Israel, restored to God's favor, won a great victory. After failure came a second chance. One defeat or failure does not signal the end of a believer's usefulness for God.

**BBC** - Victory in the Christian life is not the *absence of* conflict but the presence and protection of God *in the midst of* conflict.

## The Defeat at Ai (chapter 7)

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###### c. The Aftermath (v30-35)

## The Aftermath (v30-35)

### a. Praise to Yahweh

<sup>30</sup>**Then** Joshua built an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, in Mount Ebal,  
<sup>31</sup>**just as** Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the sons of Israel, **as** it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of uncut stones, on which no man had wielded an iron *tool*; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. <sup>32</sup>And he wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written, in the presence of the sons of Israel.

**BKC - Joshua 8:30-31** After the victory of Ai Joshua did a strange and militarily foolish thing. Instead of securing the central sector of the land with further victories he led the Israelites on a spiritual pilgrimage. Why? Simply because **Moses... had commanded it** (Deu\_27:1-8).

Without delay Joshua led the men, women, children, and cattle from their camp at Gilgal northward up the Jordan Valley to the place specified, the mountains of **Ebal** (Jos\_8:30) and Gerizim (Jos\_8:33) which are at Shechem. The march of about 30 miles was not difficult or dangerous since they passed through a sparsely populated area. **But how did the Israelites avoid a confrontation with the men of the city of Shechem, a fortress which guarded the entrance to the valley between the mountains?**

## The Defeat at Ai (chapter 7)

The Bible does not record every battle of the Conquest and the record of the capture of Shechem may have been omitted. Or the city at that time may have been in friendly hands or it may simply have surrendered without resistance. But why was this location chosen? These mountains are located in the geographic center of the land and from either peak much of the Promised Land can be seen. Here then, in a place that represented all the land, both at the time of entrance into Canaan and also when his leadership was ending (cf. Jos\_24:1), Joshua challenged the people to renew their covenant vows to the Lord.

The solemn and significant religious ceremonies at this location involved three things. First, **an altar of uncut stones** was erected on **Mount Ebal** and sacrifices (consisting of **burnt offerings** and **fellowship offerings**; cf. Lev\_1:1-17; Lev\_3:1-17) were **offered to the Lord**. Jericho and Ai, in which false gods of the Canaanites were worshiped, had fallen. Israel now publicly worshiped and proclaimed her faith in the one true God.

**Joshua 8:32** Second, **Joshua** set up some large **stones**. On their surfaces he wrote a copy of the Law of Moses. **How much of the Law was inscribed is not stated.** Some suggest only the Ten Commandments were written, while others think the stone inscription included the contents of at least Deuteronomy 5-26. Archeologists have discovered similar inscribed pillars or stelae six to eight feet long in the Middle East. And the Behistun Inscription in Iran is three times the length of Deuteronomy.

# The Bible Knowledge Commentary

## The Aftermath (v30-35)

### b. Obedience to Yahweh

<sup>33</sup>And all Israel with their elders and officers and their judges were standing on both sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger **as** well **as** the native. Half of them *stood* in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, **just as** Moses the servant of the LORD had given command at first to bless the people of Israel. <sup>34</sup>**Then 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. <sup>35</sup>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 and the little ones and the strangers who were living among them.

## The Defeat at Ai (chapter 7)

**Joshua 8:33-35** Third, **Joshua read... the Law** to the people. **Half of the people** were positioned on the slopes of **Mount Gerizim** to the south, the other **half** were on the slopes of **Mount Ebal** to the north, and **the ark of the covenant** surrounded by **priests** was in the valley between. As **the curses** of the Law were **read** one by one, the tribes on Mount Ebal responded, "Amen!" As **the blessings** were likewise read the tribes on Mount Gerizim responded "Amen!" (Deu\_11:29; Deu\_27:12-26) The huge natural amphitheater which still exists there made it possible for the people to hear every word and with all sincerity Israel affirmed that the Law of the Lord was indeed to be the Law of the land.

From this point on the history of the Jews depended on their attitude toward the Law which had been read in their hearing that day. When they were obedient there was blessing; when they were disobedient there was judgment (cf. Deu\_28:1-68). It is tragic that the affirmations of this momentous hour faded so quickly.

## The Bible Knowledge Commentary

## I. The Invasion of Canaan (1:1-5:12)

- A. The commissioning of Joshua (chap. 1)
  - 1. Joshua's listening to the Lord (1:1-9)
  - 2. Joshua's commanding the officers (1:10-15)
  - 3. Joshua's receiving support from the people (1:16-18)
- B. The spying out of Jericho (chap. 2)
  - 1. The spies' commission to Jericho (2:1)
  - 2. The spies' shielding by Rahab (2:2-7)
  - 3. The spies' intelligence information from Rahab (2:8-11)
  - 4. The spies' promise to Rahab (2:12-21)
  - 5. The spies' return to Joshua (2:22-24)
- C. The crossing of the Jordan (chap. 3)
  - 1. Preparation for the crossing (3:1-4)
  - 2. Consecration for the crossing (3:5-13)
  - 3. Completion of the crossing (3:14-17)
- D. The erecting of memorials (chap. 4)
- E. The consecration of the Israelites (5:1-12)
  - 1. The renewal of circumcision (5:1-9)
  - 2. The celebration of the Passover (5:10)
  - 3. The appropriation of the land's produce (5:11-12)

## II. The Conquest of Canaan (5:13-12:24)

- A. Introduction: The divine Commander (5:13-15)
- B. The central campaign (chaps. 6-8)
  - 1. The conquest of Jericho (chap. 6)
  - 2. The defeat at Ai (chap. 7)
  - 3. The victory at Ai (chap. 8)
- C. The southern campaign (chaps. 9-10)
  - 1. The alliance with the Gibeonites (chap. 9)
  - 2. The defense of the Gibeonites (chap. 10)
- D. The northern campaign (11:1-15)
  - 1. The confederation (11:1-5)
  - 2. The conflict (11:6-15)
- E. The review of the victories (11:16-12:24)
  - 1. The conquered areas (11:16-23)
  - 2. The conquered kings (chap. 12)

## III. The Division of Canaan (chaps. 13-21)

- A. The portions for the two and one-half tribes (chap. 13)
  - 1. The divine command to divide the land (13:1-7)
  - 2. The special grant to the Eastern tribes (13:8-33)
- B. The portion for Caleb (chap. 14)
  - 1. Introduction (14:1-5)
  - 2. Caleb at Kadesh Barnea (14:6-9)
  - 3. Caleb during the wilderness wanderings and the Conquest (14:10-11)
  - 4. Caleb at Hebron (14:12-15)
- C. The portions for the nine and one-half tribes (15:1-19:48)
  - 1. The allotment for the tribe of Judah (chap. 15)
  - 2. The allotments for the Joseph tribes (chaps. 16-17)
  - 3. The allotments for the remaining tribes (18:1-19:48)
- D. The portions for Joshua, manslayers, and Levites (19:49-21:45)
  - 1. The special provision for Joshua (19:49-51)
  - 2. The assignment of cities of refuge (chap. 20)
  - 3. The appointment of Levitical cities (21:1-42)
  - 4. Summary of the Conquest and distribution (21:43-45)

## IV. Conclusion (chaps. 22-24)

- A. A border dispute (chap. 22)
  - 1. The admonition of Joshua (22:1-8)
  - 2. The symbolic action of the Eastern tribes (22:9-11)
  - 3. The threat of war (22:12-20)
  - 4. The defense of the Eastern tribes (22:21-29)
  - 5. The reconciliation of the tribes (22:30-34)
- B. The last days of Joshua (23:1-24:28)
  - 1. Joshua's final challenge to the leaders (chap. 23)
  - 2. Joshua's final charge to the people (24:1-28)
- C. The appendix (24:29-33)

