

Joshua Lesson #9, Chapter 8

If the theme of Chapter 7 was that the sin of one person can affect the whole group, then the theme of Chapter 8 can surely be that “one defeat or failure does not signal the end of a believer’s usefulness for God (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*).” Because Chapters 7 and 8 are so closely tied together in their storyline, please read the two chapters together before doing this lesson.

1. Now that the sin of Achan has been judged, Israel has been restored. How does God reassure Joshua of His commitment to the nation (verses 1-2)?
2. What are Joshua’s battle plans in verses 2-9?
3. Contrast this battle plan with the former one against Ai in Chapter 7. How did Israel’s previous defeat contribute to this new plan?
4. God used the Israelites’ previous defeat to their advantage in the battle against Ai. Consider how God has used your own *defeats* to bless and strengthen you. In the hands of an all-wise and infinitely good God, even our defeats, are turned into blessing. How can this encourage you as you consider the defeats and failures you’ve experienced?
5. Verses 3-23 detail the battle plans and the attack on Ai. Where do the battle plans come from (verses 1-2, 8)? Why is that an important piece of information to remember?

6. Lest we think ill of God when reading of the destruction of Ai, it is crucial to remember *why* God commanded the annihilation of the people who lived in Canaan. Why was it necessary to *utterly destroy* all who lived in the land? See Deut. 7:1-2; 9:3; 20:16-18.

7. Where does Joshua place the first contingent of the army (30,000 soldiers) whose job is to burn the city (verse 9)?
 - a. The second contingent is the diversionary force, where are they camped (verse 11)?

 - b. Where is the third contingent (verse 12)?

8. What happens when the King of Ai take the bait (verses 14-17)?

9. What was the outcome of the second stage of the battle of Ai (verses 18-22)?

10. Israel was successful because they followed God's battle plans. The key for us today is to search out God's recorded "battle plans" for us. What is God's battle plan for you today? What battle plans does God have for you to follow for the rest of your life?

11. How do verses 24-27 show the fulfillment of God's promise in verses 1-2?

12. When we read verses 2 and 27, we cannot help but think of Achan (Chapter 7). If only he had waited, then all kinds of plunder and spoil would have been his *at God's command*. What kinds of lessons do you learn from this?

13. What is the final outcome for Ai and its king (verses 28-29)?

14. It is interesting to note that Joshua had the King of Ai's body taken down from the tree (see 10:27 for another example of this). Why take the body down before nightfall? See Deut. 21:22-23.
 - a. How does Gal. 3:13 reflect the commandment of Deut. 21:22-23?

15. Just like Achan, the King of Ai was buried under a great heap of stones. What would be the reminder to future generations?

16. Instead of proceeding into battle with another city, the Israelites make a spiritual pilgrimage in verses 30-35 (check your maps for the location). Why? See Deut. 11:29; 27:1-8. **Note:** Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim formed a natural amphitheater so all could hear the reading of the law.

17. Israel paused in her urgent and necessary acquisition of the land to publicly worship the Lord. What example does that set for you? What are some ways you prioritize and focus on the Lord in a similar way?

18. What is the purpose of the blessing and cursing ceremony that Moses commanded them to do? See Deut. 11:26-32.

19. There are 3 parts to this ceremony found in verses 30, 32, and 34. Please list them. Who participated in this ceremony (verse 35)?

20. In order to understand the importance of this ceremony, please read Deut. 27-28 which details all that Joshua read to the people. What did God want to indelibly print upon their minds?

21. What will cause the people to be cursed? See Deut. 28:15, 45. What will cause the people to be blessed? See Deut. 28:1-2.

22. According to Deut. 27:15-26 how were the people to respond when the cursings were read? What does this hearty assent by the people indicate about their commitment?

23. Israel recommitted themselves to God's covenant. As with any commitment it is the follow-through that matters. Are you diligent and faithful to follow through in the areas you have committed to, like reading your Bible, being faithful at Bible study, serving at church, witnessing, praying?
24. A puritan preacher, Thomas Adams, wrote, "*True obedience hath no lead at its heels,*" while in more modern times Elisabeth Elliot wrote, "*Delayed obedience is disobedience.*" Israel was quick to heed God's commands and follow-through to completion. What kind of obedience are you characterized by? Do you delay obeying when anxious thoughts invade your mind or when you'd rather be angry or when you need to show self-control? If your feet hasten to obey, but your attitude stays stubbornly behind, is it really obedience?
25. How is the maxim, "*Obey all the way, right away, and with a happy heart*" an apt description of obedience? If you are missing any of these components is it still obedience?