

Quarter Four: Lessons of Faith from Joshua

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Lesson 6—The Enemy Within

Wednesday: The Door of Hope

November 5, 2025

- **Last Week:** “God Fights for You”
 - Various Scriptures
 - Part 2: how to reconcile a God of love with a God who ordered destruction of Canaanites
- **This Week:** “The Enemy Within”
 - Joshua 7 & 8
 - Breaking of the covenant: the defeat at Ai, sin from within the camp, & victory at Ai

Memory Text: “I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds” (Jer 17:10, ESV).

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** Breach of the Covenant (SQ)
 - Josh 7 – Achan’s sin (sin from within) & Israelites’ overconfidence in their own strength; entire nation held responsible
- 2. **Monday:** The Sin of Achan (John L)
 - Josh 7:13 – 19 – investigative process; time given for offender to repent; loving, yet just way that Joshua dealt with this sin
- 3. **Tuesday:** Fateful Choices (John D)
 - Josh 7:19 – 21 – Achan’s response when he was exposed; lack of true repentance; comparison between Achan’s sin & Adam & Eve; comparison between Achan & Rahab
- 4. **Wednesday:** The Door of Hope (Jill)
 - Josh 8:1 – 29 – 2nd battle against Ai & victory – because of dependance on the Lord
- 5. **Thursday:** A Witness to God’s Power (James)
 - Josh 7:6 – 9 – Israel’s victories were evidence of the work of God; likewise, their defeats were evidence of their failure to trust / depend on Him (or sin in the camp)

Wednesday: The Door of Hope

Joshua 8:1 – 29; Hos 2:15; Ex 14:16; Ex 17:11 – 13

- Comparison between 1st & 2nd campaign against Ai:
 - 1st – entered into with self-confidence
 - Josh 7:3 – don’t send all of the people; the people of Ai are few; just send 2 or 3k
 - 2nd – entered into after seeking God

- Josh 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.’”
- 1st – entered into with sin (Achan’s sin)
 - Josh 7:1 – Achan took “of the accursed things”
- 2nd – entered into after repentance & sanctification
 - Josh 7:13 – “Get up, sanctify the people & say, ‘Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow...’”

7 Takeaways from the 2nd campaign of Ai:

- Josh 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.’”
 - **Takeaway #1: Don’t be afraid to face the same battle, if you have Jesus**
 - Would have been easier to fight a different city – not go back to scene of defeat
 - *Don’t want to face someone: easier to switch churches, jobs, spouses
 - Face the battle; face the scene of your defeat
 - Make sure you have **Jesus**
 - 365 times – “don’t be afraid”
 - Don’t be afraid: I am with you & will give you victory
 - 1 Cor 15:57 – “But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Josh 8:2, 3 – ““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.’ (3) So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai...”
 - **Takeaway #2: God gives directions; our job is to obey**
 - Walk in obedience – “Joshua arose...to go up against Ai”
- Josh 8:4 – 6 – “And he commanded them, saying: ‘Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city behind the city. (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.’”
 - God’s battle plan involved turning Israel’s initial defeat into a tactical advantage
 - Hos 2:15 – “I will give her her vineyards from there, And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope, she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she camp up from the land of Egypt.”
 - Valley of Achor means “valley of trouble”
 - Now, it becomes a “door of hope”
 - Now, it’s the inhabitants of Ai who are self-confident
 - When Israel lures them out of the city & pretends to retreat, the citizens of Ai will chase
 - **Takeaway #3: God uses the means of our defeat to become our point of strength**
 - 2 Cor 12:9 – God’s power is made perfect in my weakness

- 1 Cor 1 – God chooses the foolish things of the world to shame the wise & the weak things to shame the strong
 - Isa 40 – our God gives power to the weak & renews our strength
- Josh 8:7 – “Then you shall rise from the ambush and seize the city, for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand.”
 - **Takeaway #4: The Lord alone delivers – not our human strategies**
 - Strategy didn’t bring victory – it was God alone who brought deliverance
 - Israel claimed the victory that had already been won
 - Zech 4:6 – Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord
 - Ex 14:13, 14 – “And Moses said to the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. (14) The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.’”
 - Israelites – b4 crossing the Red Sea
 - 2 Chron 20:17 – “You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you.”
 - Jehoshaphat when besieged by Ammonites, Moabites
- Josh 8:8 – “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.”
 - All of the people were to be lured out of the city
 - Then, they could go in & capture the city by burning it
 - Vs 16, 17 – “So all the people who were in Ai were called together to pursue them. And they pursued Joshua & 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.”
 - Joshua was part of group to lead people out of city
 - Everyone left the city
 - Those lying-in-wait entered the city & burned it
 - **Takeaway #5: Relying on past victory is not enough**
 - Inhabitants of Ai were overconfident – because of previous victory
 - Won before – would win again
 - Phil 3:13, 14 – “...one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, (14) I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”
 - Don’t rest on past victories
 - Strive toward Jesus & the goal
- Josh 8:18 – 22 – “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... (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.”

- 2nd time God speaks in this chapter: victory is assured
- Spear = reminiscent of Moses with rod stretched out over Red Sea
 - Moses held his staff / rod up in battle with Amalek until victory was won
 - Joshua has now fully assumed the leadership role over Israel
- Inhabitants of Ai completely surrounded by Israelites & defeated
- **Takeaway #6: Dependence on God must be continual**
 - Joshua held up his sword until the victory was won (Vs 26)
- Josh 8:29 – “And the king of Ai he (Joshua) 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.”
 - King of Ai was spared in slaughter (Vs 23) & brought to Joshua
 - Hanged on a tree – taken down before night (dead body not to hang on a tree or pole overnight; Deut 21 – he who “is hung on a tree is accursed by God”)
 - Covered with pile of stones
 - 2 piles of stones:
 - Pile for Achan & his possessions = symbol of rebellion & defeat
 - Pile for king of Ai = symbol of Israel’s faithfulness & victory
 - **Takeaway #7: The symbol of defeat, can also be a symbol of victory**
 - The cross seemed the end of Jesus’ disciples hopes & dreams
 - Yet, the cross represents salvation & freedom from sin
 - The empty tomb seemed the end of everything
 - Yet, it symbolized hope in eternal life with Jesus

7 Takeaways from the 2nd campaign at Ai

- #1: Don’t be afraid to face the same battle, if you have Jesus
- #2: God gives directions; our job is to obey
- #3: God uses the means of our defeat to become our point of strength
- #4: The Lord alone delivers – not our human strategies
- #5: Relying on past victory is not enough
- #6: Dependence on God must be continual
- #7: The symbol of defeat, can also be a symbol of victory