

Courageous

Claiming Canaan, Lessons from the Book of Joshua

Lesson 11: Consumed (8:1-35)

The sun was setting on Israel's failure and defeat; it was time to begin again. Soon God's mercy would shine as the morning light (Joshua 8:9-10, Lamentations 3:22-23)— the shadows of defeat would give way to victory; lament would be swallowed in celebration.

One failure, one defeat, did not signal the end of Israel's usefulness to God.ⁱ F. W. Robertson said, "Life, like war, is a series of mistakes, and he is not the best Christian nor the best general who makes the fewest false steps. Poor mediocrity may secure that; but he is the best who wins the most splendid victories by the retrieval of mistakes. Forget mistakes; organize victories out of mistakes."ⁱⁱ As Henry Ford has said: a mistake is simply an "opportunity to begin again, more intelligibly".ⁱⁱⁱ

Psalm 37:24 says, "*Though [a man falls], he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholds him with His hand*" (NKJV).

Read Joshua 8:1-13.

1. What effect(s) can failure and defeat have upon a man? How could Israel have reacted? (Consider Philippians 3:13.)
2. What encouragement was offered to Joshua by the Lord? (Deuteronomy 1:21, 31:8, Joshua 1:9)
3. What was to be done with the spoil? (Joshua 8:2)
4. What would belong to Achan if he had waited?

"God always gives His best to those who leave the choice with Him."^{iv}

5. Read Romans 8:32. How does this verse defy Achan's logic? Do you struggle with this concept in any area of your life? Why or why not?

6. Describe Joshua's strategy. How does this contrast with the attack on Jericho?

7. Alan Redpath states, "Ai was much less formidable than Jericho but after the experience of defeat, it was much more difficult to overcome". He continues, "Lost ground in Christian living is very hard to recover."^v

Do you agree with his statement? Why or why not?

8. What danger lies in employing the methods and strategies you've used in prior endeavors and/or battles?

9. "The American business leader, Bruce Barton (1886-1967) said, 'When you're through changing, you're through.'"^{vi} Why are individuals often opposed to change? How can this quality be a hinderance in one's walk with God?

10. For what reasons might Joshua have lodged among the people? (v.9)

Continue reading: Joshua 8:14-29.

11. Who joined Ai against Israel? (v.17)

12. Describe the initial morale of the king, fighting men, and inhabitants of Ai. What action did they take because of this?

13. "They are the most in danger who are the least aware of it" (Matthew Henry). Read Proverbs 28:26, Obadiah 1:3, Matthew 26:33, Luke 18:9, and 1 Corinthians 10:12. How do these verses support this truth?

14. How do Joshua's actions resemble that of Moses' in Exodus 17:8-16? (v.18, 26)

15. Return to Joshua 8. What became of Ai and Bethel? Its king? (For further insight, read Deuteronomy 21:22-23.)

Finally, read Joshua 8:30-35.

16. After achieving victory at Ai, Joshua led the people 30 miles north to Shechem, located in the valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. According to Deuteronomy 11:26-32, 27:1-8, what was their purpose there?

17. Now read Genesis 12:1-9. Why was this location significant?

18. What act would be performed upon the altar? (Joshua 8:31, Leviticus 17:11)

Why mustn't the stones be altered by human hands? (Consider Ephesians 2:8-9.)

Consider this: Can you build your "altar" to your liking, and choose the sacrifice? (Romans 12:1) Explain.

19. Return to Deuteronomy 27 and read verses 11-13. Describe the position of the ark, the leaders, priests, and the tribes.

20. Upon which mountain was the law written? Why is this significant?

21. What choice was presented? (See Deuteronomy 27:14-28:14.) How did their recent experience stress the importance of God's commands, blessings and cursings?

22. Israel frequently sanctified themselves and renewed their covenant to the Lord. Is this an important practice in the life of the believer? Why or why not?

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- ⁱ Campbell, D. K. (1985). Joshua. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 347). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
- ⁱⁱ Wiersbe, Warren. (2003) *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Old Testament History*. (p. 54). Colorado Springs, Colorado: Cook Communications.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Wiersbe, Warren. (p. 54).
- ^{iv} Wiersbe. (p. 55).
- ^v Redpath, Alan. (2013). *Victorious Christian Living: Studies in the Book of Joshua*. (p. 112). Redpath Family.
- ^{vi} Wiersbe, Warren. (p. 56).