**Everything Necessary for Life and Godliness**

Joshua 8:1-35

**Good Morning Beloved,**

* There are some great fights in the Bible…
  + Samson with his jawbone…
  + Gideon with his 300…
  + David with his 5 smooth stones…
  + TODAY… Joshua…
    - not with trumpets (Joshua 6)…
    - not with the sun standing still in the sky (Joshua 10)…
    - Not with arms outstreatched (Ex. 17)…
      * But with “Fake fleeing”!

Reading of God’s Word

*8:1**And the Lord said to Joshua, “Do not fear and do not be dismayed. Take all the fighting men with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, and 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 livestock you shall take as plunder for yourselves. Lay an ambush against the city, behind it.”*

***3****So Joshua and all the fighting men arose to go up to Ai. And Joshua chose 30,000 mighty men of valor and sent them out by night.****4****And he commanded them, “Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind it. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you remain ready.****5****And I and all the people who are with me will approach the city. And when they come out against us just as before, we shall flee before them.****6****And they will come out after us, until we have drawn them away from the city. For they will say, ‘They are fleeing from us, just as before.’ So we will flee before them.****7****Then you shall rise up from the ambush and seize the city, for the Lord your God will give it into your hand.****8****And as soon as you have taken the city, you shall set the city on fire. You shall do according to the word of the Lord. See, I have commanded you.”****9****So Joshua sent them out. And they went to the place of ambush and lay between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai, but Joshua spent that night among the people.*

***10****Joshua arose 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 fighting men who were with him went up and drew near before the city and encamped on the north side of Ai, with a ravine between them and Ai.****12****He took about 5,000 men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city.****13****So they stationed the forces, the main encampment that was north of the city and its rear guard west of the city. But Joshua spent that night in the valley.****14****And as soon as the king of Ai saw this, he and all his people, the men of the city, hurried and went out early to the appointed place toward the Arabah to meet Israel in battle. But he did not know that there was an ambush against him behind the city.****15****And Joshua and all Israel pretended to be beaten before them and fled in the direction of the wilderness.****16****So all the people who were in the city were called together to pursue them, and as they pursued Joshua they were drawn away from the city.****17****Not a man was left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel. They left the city open and pursued Israel.*

***18****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.” And Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city.****19****And the men in the ambush rose quickly out of their place, and as soon as he had stretched out his hand, they ran and entered the city and captured it. And they hurried to set the city on fire.****20****So when the men of Ai looked back, behold, the smoke of the city went up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that, for the people who fled to the wilderness turned back against the pursuers.****21****And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had captured the city, and that the smoke of the city went up, then they turned back and struck down the men of Ai.****22****And the others came out from the city against them, so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side. And Israel struck them down, until there was left none that survived or escaped.****23****But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him near to Joshua.*

***24****When Israel had finished killing all the inhabitants of Ai in the open wilderness where they pursued them, and all of them to the very last had fallen by the edge of the sword, all Israel returned to Ai and struck it down with the edge of the sword.****25****And all who fell that day, both men and women, were 12,000, all the people of Ai.****26****But Joshua did not draw back his hand with which he stretched out the javelin until he had devoted all the inhabitants of Ai to destruction.****27****Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as their plunder, according to the word of the Lord that he commanded Joshua.****28****So Joshua burned Ai and made it forever a heap of ruins, as it is to this day.****29****And he hanged the king of Ai on a tree until evening. And at sunset Joshua commanded, and they took his body down from the tree and threw it at the entrance of the gate of the city and raised over it a great heap of stones, which stands there to this day.*

***30****At that time Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal,****31****just as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded the people of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, “an altar of uncut stones, upon 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 people of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written.****33****And all Israel, sojourner as well as native born, with their elders and officers and their judges, stood on opposite sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, half of them in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded at the first, to bless the people of Israel.****34****And 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.****35****There was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the sojourners who lived among them.*

**Preaching of God’s Word**

1. The cunning tactic (vs. 1-13)
   1. Verses 1 and 2 are delightful.
      1. Have you ever sinned… and repented… and wondered did it “take”?
         1. The fear of “should I grovel some more…?” can haunt people and the opening verses of…
            1. 2 Peter 1:*2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*

Can feel like they are meant for someone else.

* + - * 1. If that is you… hear verses 1-2.
  1. *8:1 And the Lord said to Joshua, “Do not fear and do not be dismayed. Take all the fighting men with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, and his people, his city, and his land.*
     1. POINT: True repentance at the end of the last chapter, lead to true reconciliation in this chapter.
        1. There is a restatement of what God promised in ***9****Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”*
  2. Then God gives the cunning tactic to his people.
     1. *2And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king.* 
        1. The plan is take 30,000 men…
           1. Send 5,000 to hid in ambush
        2. According to the people of Ai’s perspective… 25,000 men is still more than 8x the number of men that just approached the city (3,000 men in Joshua 7).
  3. Note: in a stunning twist… notice what the people get…
     1. *Only its spoil and its livestock you shall take as plunder for yourselves. Lay an ambush against the city, behind it.”*
        1. Scholars love to note that Achan cherished the plunder more than the promises… and missed both.
           1. In doing so, he listened to “serpent theology” (Dale Raplh Davis).

How do you know if you’re listening to lies… “are you focusing more on the restrictions that God has imposed rather than the riches that he has lavished? (Gen. 3:1)

* + - 1. Now Israel get the land and the plunder…
         1. David Jackman – “If only Achan had been prepared to wait for God’s timing!”
  1. The story unfolds as the bulk of the army goes north…
     1. The attack force goes west…
        1. But the resolve all men is clear…*. 7Then you shall rise up from the ambush and seize the city, for the Lord your God will give it into your hand. 8And as soon as you have taken the city, you shall set the city on fire. You shall do according to the word of the Lord. See, I have commanded you.”*
           1. Why is it critical to hear this story… is it a great military strategy…

Like in Braveheart…The Battle of Stirling

William: You be ready and do exactly as I say. On my signal, ride round behind our position and flank them.

Mornay: We must not divide our forces!

William: Do it. And let the English see you do it.

Mornay: They'll think we're running away?

William: Aye. Take out their archers. I'll meet you in the middle.

* + - * 1. The reason why it is critical to hear this story…

Is because of what it says about Joshua…

He is not Moses…

But he is presented as “an ideal Israelite in the land” (Fantuzo).

What is an ideal Israelite?

Joshua 1:7-8 - ***7****Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go.****8****This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*

* 1. Transition: The reason for the success is because the true commander leads.

1. The True Commander (vs. 14-23)
   1. The stage is set…
      1. The troops are in place…
         1. Joshua pretends to be beaten (vs. 15)…
            1. The men of Ai… buy it… (vs. 16)

The exact opposite idea from Jericho now is used…

Jericho was “shut up” (Joshua 2 and 6)

Ai is “wide open”

* 1. Then in the critical moment… the true commander… the LORD commands his servant.
     1. As Joshua stretches out his javelin… a sword or sickle…
        1. There is a connection to Moses stretching out his staff at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:16).
           1. The reason the waters parted for Moses and the ambush worked for Joshua was because the LORD is God.
  2. As the smoke plums rose in the sky…
     1. And the holy ban of God was executed…
  3. Transition: The leadership of God resulted in a total conquest.

1. The total conquest (vs. 24-35)
   1. The lasting image is of two things:
      1. First… the foes of God routed.
      2. Second… the people of God renewed.
         1. The foes of God…
            1. Ai is described like the Whole-Burnt Offerings in the Leviticus….

Smoke and ashes…

It is another heap of stone (vs. 28) next to a hung fake king (vs. 29).

* + - 1. The people of God…
         1. The Word of God is read… heard… and honored as all Israel worships the Lord in the splendor of holiness (fulfilling Deut. 27:4-8).

1. **Conclusion**
   1. Why is it good to gather… pause and consider these matters… tactics for family reunions… turning in your final papers?
      1. NO… In the words of the SEC… it just means more.
         1. Many people have drawn comparisons between the work of God in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.[[1]](#footnote-1)
            1. Moses leads God’s people out of Egypt.

In Joshua, Israel begins her conquest to claim her inheritance.

* + - * 1. Jesus completes his work to redeem a people out of sin and death.

In Acts, God’s people begin to conquer the world in view of the eternal kingdom.

* 1. Application #1 – The cunning strategy… be wise as serpents (Matt. 10:16)
     1. What is the ultimate cunning strategy that routed the enemy and established God’s people in his place?
        1. It was the cross of Jesus Christ.
           1. The death of the Son of God…

Confused the disciples… “is it now that you will restore the kingdom…”

Revealed the fear of the Pharisees… “it is better that one man should die…”

And exposed the hypocrisy of this are… the man who crucified Christ said “I find no fault in him…”

* + - 1. But it was in the death of the Savior that sin would be defeated… the serpent’s head crushed… and the wisdom of God revealed.
         1. Therefore… Beloved…

Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves… as disciples of the WORD.

“there was a manly combination of unflinching zeal and calm discretion, before which nothing was able to stand”[[2]](#footnote-2)

* + - 1. How do you do that?
         1. Boast only in the cross (Gal. 6:14).
  1. Application #2 – The True Commander… engage in warfare as soldiers (Eph. 6:12ff[[3]](#footnote-3))
     1. The LORD is the True Commander.
        1. Joshua is a mere Israelite.
           1. If you aspire to live zealously and wisely for Christ, there will be three companions who perpetually want to walk with you…

Fatigue… Criticism… and Discouragement

* + - 1. Joshua with sword in hand points to the people to obedience in the LORD’s timing.
         1. 1 Peter 1:13ff - ***13****Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.****14****As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,****15****but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,****16****since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”*
  1. Application #3 – The total Conquest… worship as sons (Rev. 21)
     1. Remember who True Israel is…
        1. It is Rahab (Joshua 2); it is Ruth; it is Jael (Judges 4-5)…
           1. it is NOT Achan (Joshua 8).
        2. The people of God is comprised of all those from every nation who look to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by faith.
           1. For the seed of Abram, Jesus Christ has triumphed over the seed of the serpent.
     2. The story of the Bible ends with all the foes of God humiliated (Rev. 19) and the people of God, in the words of our passage “sojourners and the native born” (vs. 33) being blessed.
     3. For Christ, who was accursed for us (Gal. 3:13), teaches us…
        1. *2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.*

**Prayer (Jude 24-25)**

***24****Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,****25****to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.*

**Benediction (1 Thess. 5:23-24)**  
***23****Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.****24****He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.*

1. Longman and Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, [*Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/jfbcomm?ref=Bible.Mt10.16&off=986&ctx=ter+age+gave+birth%2c+~there+was+a+manly+co), vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Eph. 6:10ff- *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.****11****Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)