

## “Fear Not!”

### Joshua Chapter Eight

Achan’s sin was the root cause of Israel’s defeat at Ai, but Joshua had listened to the carnal advice of the spies without first seeking the Lord’s counsel. Matthew Henry wrote, “When we faithfully put away sin, that accursed thing which separates between our God, *then*, and *not till then*, we may expect to *hear* from God for our comfort; and God’s *directing* us how to go on in our Christian walk and warfare is a good *evidence* of His being reconciled to us.” Sin cannot destroy our relationship with God (Rom. 8:38-39; Heb. 13:5), but it can hinder our fellowship with Him (1John 1:6).

Joshua is now ready to listen to the LORD again. The LORD begins with the reassurance (Isa. 12:21) that Jesus gave to His apostles the night of His betrayal, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:1-4, 27). *Fear* does not originate from God (2Tim. 1:7) and perfect love *casts* out fear (1John 4:18). God’s command was designed not just for Joshua but for the entire nation (Josh. 7:5). Further assurance in the prophecy (Rom. 4:17) is the word that Israel may now keep the spoil of war, unlike at Jericho, which led to Achan’s sin ((Rom. 8:31-32; Eph. 1:3, 11).

The method by which Ai will be conquered *differs* from Jericho. God knows what is best for His people (Rom. 8:28) and His chastening (Heb. 12:4-11), while difficult, leads back to full favor. God had *sovereignly delivered* Ai into their hands, but they were *accountable* to follow His commands (Isa. 38:1-16; Acts 27:22-44).

Ai was in close proximity to Bethel and received their help, but no one can stand before the army of the *living* God (1Sam. 17:26). The instructions of the Lord are meticulously followed, the ambush laid, and victory belongs to Israel. An altar is built to worship; the Law of Moses is written and read (Deut. 6:4-25). May we remember the same (2Tim. 3:16).

This chapter provides another picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. Seemingly defeated by death on the cross as was Israel at the gates of Ai, Israel triumphs in the end just as Christ ultimately defeats death in the Resurrection. So it remains for all believers as we tread this life. The evil world system continues to exist, but has been *overcome* by Christ (John 16:33), even though it appears otherwise. We must live in *His victory* (Col. 3:1-4) and look forward to the consummation of the age when Christ returns.