

Joshua 07-05-11b

Let's resume our study now in the book of Joshua. We're looking at the situation specifically of Jericho and Ai. These are the gateway cities to the land of Canaan from the entry point there across the Jordan.

It is the means by which God is going to lead the Israelites to split the forces in the north and the forces in the south and divide this conquest essentially into two campaigns because the Israelites are not numerous enough to overcome the land in one fell swoop. And they need time to establish occupancy and possession of the land that they conquer. And so God intends for the conquest to take time.

And for that reason, there is a gradual conquest. Not a gradual infiltration like the liberal scholars like to say, but the conquest is spread over a period of years and it is for the benefit of the Israelites that it doesn't happen all at once so that they can consolidate their gains, so that they can keep what they conquer. And there is a point of application there as well.

Once we move into an area of spiritual maturity, do not expect every problem to resolve and every challenge to be easily overcome. There are things that take time and it ought to take time. There are issues that we work on and work against and work through for extended periods of time.

And just remember the example of the conquest. It is a good thing. It is a necessary thing that we consolidate our gains before we advance.

One of the penalties often experienced by military forces when they move too rapidly and make too deep an incursion into hostile territory is that they are flanked. They are surrounded. Their lines of communication and supply are cut off.

They find themselves surrounded because they do not consolidate. So our observation here is that this is according to the plan and purpose of God. And you just have to trust that God knows what He is doing when things take time.

Well, we talked about the archaeological situation in the ancient Near East. And I just want to summarize by saying there is... And you would say, well, you know, Sam, it sounds to me like you are sort of an amateur here and it is easy for you to just blithely wave away with your hand these guys who have spent their lives studying the ancient Near East. I am giving you a summary.

I am not blithely waving it away with my hand. I have spent most of my adult life in seminary and post seminary reading and keeping up with the articles and the excavations and the conclusions that have been drawn, going back and reviewing the evidence of Kathleen Kenyon, Garstang, and all the other guys that have done the

digging over there. And this is not a hasty or a facile conclusion that I and many others draw from looking at the evidence.

It is solid. It will stand up. There are academic papers.

There are journal articles that have been written. There is a great amount of heated debate in the scholarly world because what I am telling you has a lot of traction and makes a lot of sense. But it takes time to overturn the establishment of literally two centuries.

In 1900, virtually everybody in the biblical scholarly world believed that the Exodus took place in 1440 B.C. and the conquest began in 1400 B.C. It was not until these excavations in the 1920s and 1930s that things began to change. But there are a combination of problems. Some of the tells were initially identified as one city and they turned out to be something else.

AI has been variously identified as three separate locations. And they are still not sure which is which. And each one has its proponents and its defendants.

You can imagine a guy that goes to a place and digs for 17 seasons because he thinks that it is AI doesn't want to find out that it is you know, cure bit something or other and has no significance. So he is going to go to the death defending this is AI. You know, just because a guy is an archaeologist or biblical scholar he doesn't check in his humanity.

He is just as fallible and just as jealous of his reputation and just as, it is like anybody else. These guys are not made out of anything special. They are people like you and me.

They have just gone into a particular area of expertise. Some of us know a lot about computers. Some of us know a lot about cooking and recipes.

Some of us know a lot about making stuff out of cloth or planting flowers. These guys just happen to know a lot about what has gone on in excavations in the Middle East and the literature and stuff. That is just their area of enthusiasm.

But they don't glow in the dark. They are not, you know, walking around with angels at each shoulder. They are just people.

And people make mistakes and people get jealous and people fight and people defend bad positions and have faulty logic. But people say, well, he has got letters after his name and he has been doing this for, you know, 17 years, 23 years, 32 years. So he must be right.

Nonsense. These guys started at the very same place that you and I start. Reading the literature, looking at the data, drawing conclusions and there is nothing special about them other than they spend a lot of time reading and accumulating information.

Well, that doesn't make them right. Just like reading the old greyheads that have written systematic theologies, Hodge and Shedd and these other guys. It doesn't make them right.

People just spend a lot of time in an area. So AI, if you look at your map there, we need to understand this because when God says set an ambush, how does this take place? And why is it detailed in scripture to the extent that it is? Why am I belaboring all of these points? I will tell you one thing. One of the reasons I am belaboring it is one of the first things you are going to hear if you get into any kind of conversation with people who don't think the Bible ought to be trusted is they are going to say archaeology has proven that the Bible is false.

And that is a lie. It is a flat out, unmitigated falsehood. Archaeology has not proven that the Bible cannot be true.

Conclusions that archaeologists have drawn conflict with the Bible because they have faulty assumptions and they misconstrue the evidence. Just like scientists who look inside cells and who compare species and say I think this stuff just created itself out of the muck. I am going to throw the pieces of an alarm clock in my dryer and turn it on and sooner or later it is going to come out as a completely working alarm clock.

Just wait. Just give it enough time. Those pieces will fall into place and it will wind itself and start ticking and set itself to Greenwich Mean Time.

It will all happen out of nowhere as if by magic. This is the equivalent of what they are saying. But the magic in evolution is time.

In the same way, in archaeology, if you start with faulty assumptions you are going to draw conclusions that favor your prejudice. So, first of all is the name. I mentioned before that a lot of people think the name AI means ruins.

We already know that Achor, Achen has the idea of ruination and destruction. There are other perfectly good words that mean ruin. If you look at a map of the Middle East today, you will find that a lot of places are called Kirbet AI This and Kirbet AI That.

Kirbet is derived from a word Horba which means ruin. Perfectly good words for ruin. But they have concluded that AI must mean ruin because it is a ruined city and they don't know what else it might be.

But there are other ideas for what it means. The thing that I've given you by Dr. David Livingston is good. I told you he's got two or three really good things on his website.

Another good thing that he's got is a big long, and this is why I didn't give it to you as a handout. It is like 17 or 18 pages long. He's got a great long thing on locating biblical AI.

Well, we already know where it is. We're just cut to the chase. That's what you have in your little short two-page handout.

But suffice it to say that locating AI depends on whether or not you believe the Bible is true. We're going to assume for the purposes of argument that you believe the Bible is true. Now, there are nine criteria in the Bible for identifying AI.

So whatever site out of the favored candidates is going to have to meet these nine criteria. First, there has to be a mountain between Bethel and AI. We know these things.

AI, by the way, is mentioned all the way back in Genesis chapter 12. You remember where, in fact, I think it's quoted on your handout there, where it says, Genesis 12.8, I think Abram camped on a mountain with Bethel on the west and AI on the east. So guess what? There has to be a mountain between Bethel and AI.

And Bethel has to be west of AI. Not north, not south, west. Secondly, there has to be a valley north of AI.

We know this from the account here in Joshua. There has to be a hiding place for the guys who are going to perpetrate this ambush. They have to be able to go somewhere and be invisible.

There has to be a descent that leads to Jericho. There has to be some ground that is higher. There has to be a geological feature fitting the description of the Shavarim.

We'll talk about that later. It's labeled on your map. It has to have been a walled city with a gate.

Because that's mentioned in the Joshua account. It has to be smaller than Gibeon. And Gibeon was about 11 acres in size.

It has to be near Bethel, not too far away. It can't be like miles and miles away. And it has to have been occupied during the time of Abram and during the time of Joshua.

When you adjust the chronology and get everything straightened out, it needs to have been a city when Abram was there and it needs to be a city when Joshua was there. Pretty tough to ambush a city of ruins with nobody living there. So, to cut to the chase here, your map shows El Bira here, which is near this mountain, Jebel et Tawil, the tall mountain.

And this is the site that fits all nine of these criteria. Now, when you find people saying, oh no, AI is somewhere else, and then making arguments from it, it's because they have not taken the biblical account at its word and found a site that matches all these criteria. So, having done that and saved ourselves 18 pages of argument, we move on.

The city is not particularly conspicuous. You'll notice in the second page of your text

here, it says the first battle which Israel lost because of Achan's perfidy took place by 3,000 warriors. This is actually 3 platoon contingents, 3 tribal contingents.

We know this is not thousands. What we do know is that as you scale these numbers down, the next force in Joshua chapter 8 is 10 times the size. Instead of 3 contingents, now there's going to be 30.

And this is more appropriate because not only are they going to deal with people from Ai, but Ai has gotten reinforcements from Bethel on the other side of the mountain. So, before we look at our handout further, let's take a look at the account in Joshua chapter 8. God tells him, I've given it into your hand, the king, his people, his city, and his land. Remember, these are sort of feudal fiefdom type of things.

You've got a walled city and you've got all the land surrounding. God says, I've given the whole thing into your hand. This time, keep the spoil and the cattle.

So, Joshua arose in verse 3. All the people of war go up against Ai. Joshua chose 30 elephants. He's got 30 platoons now instead of 3. He commanded them, saying, Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind the city.

The first thing he does is reiterate what God told him. Joshua doesn't change the plan. He doesn't add to it.

He doesn't take away from it. I was reminding my daughter of the failed rescue attempt of the hostages. She's going through fairly recent history.

Remember the Iranian hostage crisis and the failed rescue attempt? A couple of weeks ago, they went through the Bay of Pigs, which was another fiasco. In both of those cases, if you look at the details, it started out being a good plan. It was manned with everything that was necessary.

Then people got cold feet and started scaling it back. Started cutting back, cutting down, and ended up with far less than what should have been used. Both of them turned into disasters.

So, Joshua doesn't change it. He says, Look, we're going in there and we're not going to have any shortage of troops because these guys are going to be confident. They're going to be ready.

They're going to be cocky. They're going to think, Hey, we kicked them once, we'll kick them again. And they're going to have reinforcements.

So, 30 LFs. Lie in ambush against the city, behind the city. Do not go very far from the city.

All of you be ready. 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. See, Joshua is thinking, We're going to play on that experience.

That experience is not going to be wasted. We're going to use it to our advantage. Our defeats can be used for our advantage.

Even when we fail, even when there is sin in the camp, it can be turned to advantage. You've heard all of the standard sayings, a bone is strongest where it has been broken and healed. Sometimes, these things wind up being our strong points because we know better.

We've been there and done that and we're not going there again. So, as at the first, they're going to come out. They're going to be coming after us.

And we shall flee before them. It's a ruse. Now, is this deceptive? Is this sort of the equivalent of a lie? Joshua comes out.

Joshua comes marching forward now. Hurrah, hurrah. And here he comes towards the city.

The AI people say, Ha, some more people we can come out and beat. And so they come out and Joshua says, Oh, oh, oh. And he's going to turn around and run away.

Run away, run away. And they're going to go prancing and dancing in the other direction. Oh, oh, the AI-ites are coming after me.

This is deception. This is a lie. Joshua is not afraid.

Joshua is not defeated. He is deceiving the enemy. And it is not a sin.

It is the will of God. God said, set an ambush. How do you set an ambush? You fool the enemy.

You do not go like the British. The British used to fight. We're going to line up in our red coats and we're going to line up there in a manly fashion and front row kneel, second row fire, you know, and stand there and be slaughtered and picked off like a bunch of ninnies.

It's no wonder the sun set on the British Empire because they had no sense. I'm just telling you, you know, people make much about, oh, Rahab told a lie. The prophet, I never can remember if it was Elijah or Elisha, that told a lie and led those soldiers all the way to the edge of the thing.

There's lies in the Bible. And they're perfectly fine. There is a time to lie.

Now, you better be careful. Don't be, well, sin's good. I could lie.

But subterfuge and deception are an inherent part of this plan. It's the Bible. So, legalistic, oh, I cannot tell a lie, that wonderful meal that you slaved over for three hours and served me tasted like shoe leather and I hated it.

I mean, this is not, you don't have to do that. There is a time to say, I really appreciate this wonderful meal that you laid out. It's wonderful because of the effort you put into it, not the way it tasted necessarily.

But you don't say that. You can use subterfuge. You can deceive.

You can leave the impression that that's the most wonderful repast you ever flocked your lip over, when in fact, you're just gasping and choking to get it down. It's okay. Deception is sometimes a part of the plan of God.

Do you think Satan was fooled when the Lord Jesus Christ kicked him for all time and eternity at the cross? Did God say not Satan? Let me lay out my whole plan before you because I don't want to deceive you. I don't want there to be any doubt. Not at all.

God fooled Satan. So, I'm just saying, have some balance. Have some common sense here.

And please, in the application of that principle, have some common sense. And don't quote me. I mean, you're on your own.

Lay an ambush. Fool these people. Trick them and defeat them.

Listen. We had, before I leave this point, we had a discussion when I was in seminary. I am telling you the truth.

We had a discussion for a solid hour in one of my seminary classes about whether or not it is godly in sports to faint. F-E-I-N-T. You know how running back is coming around the end? There he's doing the end around.

He's going to hand off. The end is going to do the end, or whatever. And you're going to fake the guy out.

You're going to do a head fake and act like you're going this way and go this way. That's a deception. You're communicating something that is not true.

We sat for an hour debating the ethics of whether or not playing in sports. I mean, where do you draw the line on what is a lie? At any rate, there are times when you have to do necessary things. In World War II, you remember when they were faking out the Germans about where the invasion of Normandy was going to be? And they built all those cardboard tanks.

And aerial reconnaissance saw, oh look, they're mashing their forces. It was all made out

of canvas and cardboard. It's a lie.

And it's great. It's a wonderful thing. God blessed it.

Anyway. So, it's an ambush. Be ready.

I will approach the city. It will come about when they come out against us. We will flee.

We will drop our swords and run away, run away with our hands in the air. For they will come out after us till we have drawn them from the city. They will say they are fleeing before us just like the first time.

And we will flee before them. Then you shall rise from the ambush and seize the city for the Lord your God will deliver it into your hand. We will draw them out.

We will fake them out. We're going to overextend them. And it will be when you have taken the city, you shall set the city on fire.

According to the commandment of the Lord you shall do. This is the key. According to the commandment of the Lord.

The Lord said set an ambush. Did the Lord say set an ambush at Jericho? No. By the way, if you ever get a chance to see pictures of the reconstruction, the archaeologists have done kind of like a cross section of the tell where Jericho is.

And one of the things you'll see is that Jericho, the city, was built on a rock mound. And even before the city had walls, there was a steep rock face that was virtually impossible other than a couple of ramped roads to get into the city. But for most of the ways that you try to approach the city, there's this real steep rocky face.

And it was a natural place to build. This is why it got rebuilt later because it was just such a strategically ideal place to put a city. So easy to defend.

And then on top of that, they said we'll make what's good even better and they put walls on top. Why did God cause the walls of Jericho to fall outward? Because when they did, the rubble from the walls fell down and filled that gap between the level ground and this rock face and created a ramp for the Israelites. Remember, each man went straight into the city from where he was when they were marching around.

The reason they could do that is the rubble from the walls made a ramp for them to go because they all went up. It was an uphill charge. Many times you see it and it's on a flat level plain and the walls go and guys are crawling over the rubble to get in.

They had to crawl up. They had to go up. But it was made much easier.

That's the whole reason the walls fell. Here, it's a different strategy. Ai is situated

differently.

If you look at the map, you can see that it's on a promontory. It sort of reminds you of Mount Zion where there's a higher part of the slope and then there's sort of a shoulder. Ai sits in the sheltered protection of this taller elevation to the northwest, west-northwest, and it's kind of on a shoulder.

This is what David did when he built the city of David, which is now in Jerusalem. Remember, the temple wound up being up on that real high area. But the original city of David was on a shoulder.

Even direction-wise, it's very similar to this. So, that's another reason that El Bira fits the biblical description so well. So, Joshua therefore, verse 9, sent them out.

And they went to lie in ambush and they stayed between Bethel and Ai on the west side of Ai. How could they be hidden? Well, what's to the west of Ai between Ai and Bethel? What does Genesis tell us? Where did Abram stay in 12a of Genesis? There is a rise, there's a mountain between Ai and Bethel. So, Joshua's men go and they get behind that rise.

They're in Dephile. They're behind the military crest. Joshua lodged that night among the people.

Then he rose up early in the morning and he mustered the people and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. So, any of the scouts, any of the recon guys that are watching the camp of Israel, this ambush force sneaked out. They went west and they hooked around north and they got behind that rise and they were undetected.

Joshua, wearing his leader's robes, is flaunting himself. He's before the people. He's marching around.

Everybody says, well, the Israelite army hasn't done anything because there's their leader. So, Joshua sort of parades himself where he can be seen by the scouts. So, he rose up early in the morning.

He makes a big show of mustering the people and saying, okay, here we go. He takes a force. All the people who were with him went up and drew near.

They came before the city and camped on the north side of Ai. Look again at your map. See where it says Joshua here? Look at the elevation.

Can the people from Ai see Joshua? I mean, this is a big hand-waving, here I am thing. It's not even very tactical. And so, the people in Ai are saying, these Israelites are rubes.

When their God doesn't knock walls down, they're just hopeless when it comes to tactics. The guy has skylined himself. This is what we call it.

In infantry tactics, if you stand on the highest elevation in the area and stand there waving, you've skylined yourself. You're a target. Everybody knows where you are.

That's what Joshua does. He takes his force and he skylines himself to the north. Where is the sun in the morning? It rises in the southeast and travels across the southern hemisphere of the sky, right? So, what's a good tactic when you're attacking? Put the sun in their eyes.

Come up from the south, right? Because you're silhouetted. The visibility is not so good. But Joshua is on a rise and the rising sun in the southeast, its golden rays are just illuminating him.

He's glowing up there. Hello there, I'm Joshua with my little band of hardy guys about to get slaughtered by you people in Ai. That's what he's doing.

So, camped on the north side, a valley lay between them and Ai. You can see that valley on your map there. Remember, this is a perfect representation based on the biblical data.

He took about five LFs. Remember, there were three LFs the first time, so this is not quite double the original force that the Ai people attacked and ran off. He's got five LFs and he set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai on the west side of the city.

Now, this is confusing, and I'm not going to take time to go through all of the Hebrew and straighten it out. All I want to say is, the 5,000 are with Joshua. Just trust me on this.

If you straighten out the Hebrew, Joshua's got five LFs skylined on the northern hill. The 25 LFs are in defilade. They are the guys waiting on the other side of the mountain.

Okay? So, he's got five LFs with him, 25 in defilade, in ambush. They set the people, all the army that was on the north side of the city, and its rear guard on the west of the city. Again, in Hebrew this translates completely differently, but I don't have time to go through it.

Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley. Now, it happened when the king of Ai saw it that the men of the city hurried and rose early and went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at an appointed place before the plain. He did not know there was an ambush against him behind the city.

The men of Ai are coming out, if you look at your map, and they're going to attack downhill. They're going to rush down there and get Joshua. Joshua made himself visible in the skyline, and then he went down into the plain.

So, these guys again are attacking downhill. This is like what happened at Gettysburg, when the Union army took the heights, and the Confederates were having to try to

attack uphill. It's the worst.

You don't want to have to attack uphill with no cover. Of course, this is hand-to-hand combat. It's not like they're shooting at it, but still, you've got the advantage being uphill.

So, the king of Ai says, this is like shooting fish in a barrel, so to speak. They didn't have fish or barrels back then. And so, Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them and fled by the way of the wilderness.

So, they're heading generally east, toward the way of the wilderness. This draws the military forces of Ai in an easterly, kind of east-northeasterly direction. All the people who were in Ai were called together to pursue them.

They pursued Joshua and were drawn away from the city. There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel. Now, think about it.

Where are the 25 LFs? They're in a defilade between Bethel and Ai. So, how did the men from Bethel not see them? Look at your map. See where ancient Bethel is? If you're going to come from Bethel and go to Ai, what's your direction going to be? You're going to go straight east and then hook down south, right? They go down this way because it's all high ground.

They're going to stay on the ridge and come and reinforce. So, the king of Ai says, hey, I see Joshua over here. Come reinforce me because he's afraid Joshua might come around and attack from the north.

So, he says, hey, Bethel guys, come secure my left flank, basically. So, these guys are all worried about a battle up on the heights. And the ambush is all down in that valley to the south and southwest a little bit.

So, they let the city open and pursued Israel. Verse 18 of chapter 8 of Joshua. The Lord said to Joshua, this is in the middle of the ambush.

The bait has been dangled. It has been taken. All of these guys have rushed out of the city.

The men from Bethel have come and they're all heading east. And God speaks at the right moment. How long do you draw this out? How far do you draw them out? How long do you wait before you spring the trap? God gave the timing.

God gave the word. The Lord then said to Joshua, stretch out the spear that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand. So, Joshua stretched out the spear that was in his hand toward the city.

And those in ambush arose quickly out of their place. Now listen, where are the men in

ambush? Southwest. Where's Joshua? Heading east, northeast.

How do they see the spear that's in his hand? This was a prearranged signal. When you see me turn around and hoist my spear, spring the trap. They didn't have red star clusters.

They didn't have a big WP airburst or something that they could alert. So, they have to be able to see him. How do they do this? They've got to have a chain of lookers, at least one, to relay the signal.

Because these guys down in Death Valley can't see what's happening. That's why they don't know when to spring the trap. Somebody has to tell them that Joshua has raised his spear.

And this is why you plan ahead. You set up your communications and your signals ahead of time. So, Joshua, after the Lord speaks to him and says, Okay, Joshua, now turn around and do the spear thing.

The city is yours. And Joshua does it, but it's God's timing. God's timing is perfect.

And sometimes we know generally how things are going to need to go, but we don't know exactly when. How long do I wait? How long do I... And if you're looking to the Lord, if you're doing what you're supposed to do and being obedient, God will indicate the time. And my working theory is, if I'm not sure it's the time, it's not the time.

If it's the time, you know it's the time. If you're single and you meet somebody and you say, I wonder if I should marry... As long as you're wondering, it's not the time. When you meet someone and you say, I have got to marry this person or perish, that's the time.

You know. When it is a spiritual gift in question, if you wind up like me and others having a gift where it requires you to go to seminary and get training and so on, if you're asking yourself whether or not you should go, you shouldn't go. It's not the time.

There will come a point where you say, this has got to happen or I'm going to explode. And you know. There are times when you know that something is in the offing.

Something is a part of the plan of God. You're just not sure of when to pull the trigger, when to raise the spear. Look to the Lord.

God will give you the sign for the time. And that's an application of this. God told Joshua what to do and Joshua did it.

But there's a critical piece which is timing. Timing is critical. Joshua can't see how many people have come out of Ai.

He's going the other direction, waving his hands. The men in ambush can't see because

they're in ambush. They're in defilade.

God can see. God knows when. And God gives the signal.

Joshua gives the signal. The relay gives the signal and the ambush is sprung. So, those in ambush arose quickly.

Verse 19, out of their place arose quickly. If you've read any of the history of the Civil War, you know that part of the reason the South lost is guys who should have been quick weren't quick. Stopping to pick strawberries for crying out loud instead of showing up when General Lee told them to show up.

Picking strawberries. It's just, well, you know, if you're rooting for the South, even though you know how it comes out, and you think, what is the matter with it? Well, I don't have time to go into that. So, they rose 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. Notice, quickness, energy, vivacity. Get with it.

Get it done. If it's an ambush, everything depends on doing it with verve, with power, with speed, with great energy. And that's what they do.

If you're going to do it, then do it. What you do, do with all your might. If you're going to love the Lord, love Him with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.

That's what these guys do. They ran. They quickly arose.

They entered it, they hurried, and set it on fire. So now, the men of Ai, and you can imagine a quasi-comic moment here as they are all in the heat and the flush of victory, and isn't this great, we've routed them a second time, and then there's this great uh-oh moment, this great sinking feeling when they start smelling the air and, wait, what's that burning smell? And they look over their shoulder and their city is going up in flames and they realize that they've been had. They realize that they've been suckered and to great destructive effect because they and all they have are going to now be destroyed.

This is a metaphor for the entire span of human history. Those angelic, invisible principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this age who are pursuing the hapless villagers here on earth are going to look over their shoulder and see the smoke and flame of the lake of fire into which they will soon be cast because for whatever reason they've been deceived and they think they're going to win, they think they've got a case, they think they've won, and they're going to discover just the reverse. And it's amazing, we can talk about this, we can see it in the word of God, and for some reason the angelic forces of darkness just don't get it.

There is a blindness to truth and there's a blindness to fact that affects those who are in

the grip of evil and that's the only explanation I have. Satan's supposed to be so much smarter than us. Why can we see this and he can't? I don't know.

But he doesn't get it. He's just like the men of Ai. He thinks that he's got God's people routed and on the defensive and he could not be more wrong.

Smoke of the city ascended unto heaven. God is getting another Olah here. He's getting another Karam, so to speak.

It's a sacrifice unto God. It's going up in smoke before him. 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.

Now suddenly they are in a pincher because they're demoralized. And by the way, here's the effect of morale. Joshua is outnumbered.

If I was the men of Ai and I had motivation, I would continue attacking the smaller force. But they lose all heart and they lose all motivation and they go into confusion. And although they outnumber Joshua's force, they can't think to attack them now.

And they flee before Joshua's smaller force. But this is what God promised. One of you will put to flight an Eliph.

God promised. And that's exactly what happens because they turn. Joshua has that confident approach.

And they turn and they yell and they're coming this way. And the men of Ai, absolutely. And the men of Bethel just come unglued.

They come unraveled. Others came out of the city against them. They were caught in the midst of Israel.

Some on this side and some on that side. Normally, it's a blessing to be in the midst of Israel. Not in this case.

They struck them down. They let none of them remain or escape. It is a complete and utter victory.

This is the kind of victory that we can experience in our lives if we are obedient, if we trust that God knows what He's doing, that God's timing is perfect, God's plan is perfect, God's power is perfect. This principle for the nation of Israel applies to individual believers now. We'll pick up and see the aftermath of this next time.

Be sure and check the download folder for additional materials under the Joshua study. Let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for the encouragement and the promises that are ours in Christ. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths on our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.