

- I) V1-2 INTRO: Then the Lord said to Joshua Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed take all the people of
  - a) Israel had been defeated by a small army from the city of Ai
    - 1) Thirty six men had died, and their army had been routed, and the people had been traumatized
  
- II) THE DEFEAT: Had caused Joshua to fall on his face before God, shaken and broken
  - a) He did not have a clue why the army had been beaten so easily and so badly
    - 1) As he prayed, God had made it clear to him why this had happened
    - 2) Achan had taken some of the goods from Ai, and had hidden them in his tent
    - 3) This sin was to be taken care of, or the nation would continue to suffer defeat
  
- III) JOSHUA DEALT SWIFTLY WITH ACHAN: And he and his family were executed
  - a) Sin needs to be dealt with swiftly, and decisively
    - 1) Eccl 8:11 Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil
  
- IV) KEY: The people raised up a heap of stones to remind them of what had happened
  - a) The Lord turned from his anger, and once again would be with the people
    - 1) Micah 7:18 Who *is* a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights *in* mercy.
  
- V) V1 NOW THAT THE SIN: Has been dealt with, God once again gives Joshua orders
  - a) NOTICE: He begins with encouragement to him: Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed
    - 1) After confession of the sin and dealing with it, God is now once again working on their behalf
    - 2) Pr 28:13 He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy.
  
- VI) SINCE THE SIN IS DEALT WITH: God will once again be with them and they will have victory
  - a) This is something that had already been promised to him
    - 1) Dt 31:7-8 Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, He *is* the one who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed."
    - 2) All the people of war is another way of speaking of a large fighting force
  
- VII) V2 AND: You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king Only its spoil and its cattle
  - a) When they took Jericho, they were not allowed to take any of the spoil for themselves
    - 1) They took the gold, silver, bronze, and iron and consecrated it to the treasury of the Lord
    - 2) The city, including the population as well all livestock were utterly destroyed
  
- VIII) THIS TIME: They are given permission to take the spoil and livestock for themselves
  - a) The spoils of war will belong to them
    - 1) They are to lay an ambush for the city
  
- IX) V3-8 SO: Joshua arose and all the people of war to go up against Ai and Joshua chose 30,000 mighty
  - a) Ai had a population of 12,000 (V25), but Joshua had learned his lesson
    - 1) In the first campaign, he had been advised to take a small force of 3,000 (7:4)
    - 2) This time, he is bringing 30,000 proven military men
  
- I) HIS STRATEGY WAS BASIC: He divided his forces into three sections

- a) He had men prepared to sack and burn the city, a decoy group, and 5000 lying in wait (V12)
- II) V7 THEN: You shall rise from the ambush and seize the city for the Lord your God will deliver it
  - a) God had caused Israel to be defeated in their first campaign, but now He will give them victory
    - 1) Even though they have overwhelming numbers, God is still to be known as the one giving victory
    - 2) Pr 21:31 The horse *is* prepared for the day of battle, But deliverance *is* of the LORD.
- III) V8 AND: It will be when you have taken the city that you shall set the city on fire According to the
  - a) Their orders: destroy it completely, even as they had destroyed Jericho (6:24)
- IV) V9-13 JOSHUA: Therefore sent them out and they went to lie in ambush and stayed between Bethel
  - a) The army camped just north west of Ai and posted themselves, waiting to attack
    - 1) Joshua then prepared the other contingents for the parts that they would soon play
- V) V14-17 NOW: It happened when the king of Ai saw it that the men of the city hastened and rose early
  - a) The plan worked: they thought that they would once again defeat Israel, and came after them
    - 1) Joshua pretended that they were running away, drawing them after them and leaving the city open
    - 2) Pr 16:18 Pride *goes* before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.
- VI) V18-23 THEN: The Lord said to Joshua Stretch out the spear that is in our hand toward Ai for I will give
  - a) The raised javelin was the signal for the army to enter and sack Ai
    - 1) It also would serve as an outward symbol of confidence in God's promise to give them Ai (V1)
- VII) V19 THE ARMY WAS ALERT AND PREPARED: As soon as he gave the signal, they moved quickly
  - a) There was no hesitation, but immediate response to the signal
    - 1) Their faith provoked them to move quickly to secure what God had promised them
- VIII) V20-21 AND: When the men of Ai looked behind them they saw and behold the smoke of the city
  - a) As this happens, the pursued now become the pursuers: the trap had worked
    - 1) Joshua sees the smoke rising, and knowing the city is taken turns on his attackers
- IX) V22-23 THEN: The others came out of the city against them so they were caught in the midst of Israel
  - a) Israel destroys the army and captures the king
- X) V24-29 AND: It came to pass when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field
  - a) Ai is destroyed, the spoils taken, the king executed: no future problems, and a proper punishment
- XI) FIRST: We learn the need to recognize the reality of our enemy and his potential to bring damage
- XII) FACT: Our greatest enemy *is our own flesh*, and Ai could also be a picture of our carnal flesh
  - a) Gal 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.
  - b) Ro 8:5-7 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.
    - 1) We need to remember we have spiritual enemies, not the least being our own flesh
- I) SECOND: We learn that we need to examine the reasons for our personal defeats
  - a) NORMALLY: The key reason for us not being victorious is that we relied *on our own strength*

- 1) Joshua had been told that the city was small and would not take much to defeat it: presumption
  
- II) IN OUR SPIRITUAL BATTLES: We need to remember that without Jesus, we can do nothing
  - a) QUOTE: We are apt to say, "It is not at all likely that having been through the greatest crisis of my life I would now turn back to the things of the world." Do not try to predict where the temptation will come; it is the *least likely thing* that is the real danger... Unguarded strength is actually a *double weakness*, because that is where the *least likely* temptations will be effective in sapping strength. The Bible characters stumbled over their *strong points*, never their *weak ones*.
    - 1) 1 Co 10:12 If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall (NLT)
  
- III) IF WE WILL HAVE VICTORY: We need to become aware of our own weaknesses
  - a) We need to come to understand how easy it is for us to fall, and to keep our eyes on the Lord
    - 1) Ro 7:24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
    - 2) Jn 15:5 I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me *you can do nothing*
  
- IV) WE NEED: To be aware of the cravings of the flesh and of how our flesh wants to dominate
  - a) We cannot control or eradicate our flesh by simply trying hard
    - 1) J. Vernon McGee says it is like pouring French perfume on a pile of manure, expecting to transform it into a sand pile in which our children can play
  
- V) THIRD: We learn to rely on the *work of Jesus* in our lives, understanding that He has set us free
  - a) We have not only been set *free*, but have also been given *the power* to live as those free in Him
    - 1) Gal 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.
  
- VI) V30-31 NOW: Joshua built an altar to the LORD God of Israel in Mt Ebal as Moses the servant of
  - a) This was according to previous commands given in the law of Moses
    - 1) Ex 20:24-25 An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you. And if you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone; for if you use your tool on it, you have profaned it.
      - 2) Uncut stones kept worship simple, and did not give place to man's showmanship
  
- VII) V32-35 AND THERE: In the presence of the children of Israel he wrote on the stones a copy of the law
  - a) For Israel to keep the law, they would need to hear and know it
    - 1) This was to be the law of the land, and Israel needed to be reminded of the conditions of the law
    - 2) The whole counsel is what keeps us safe