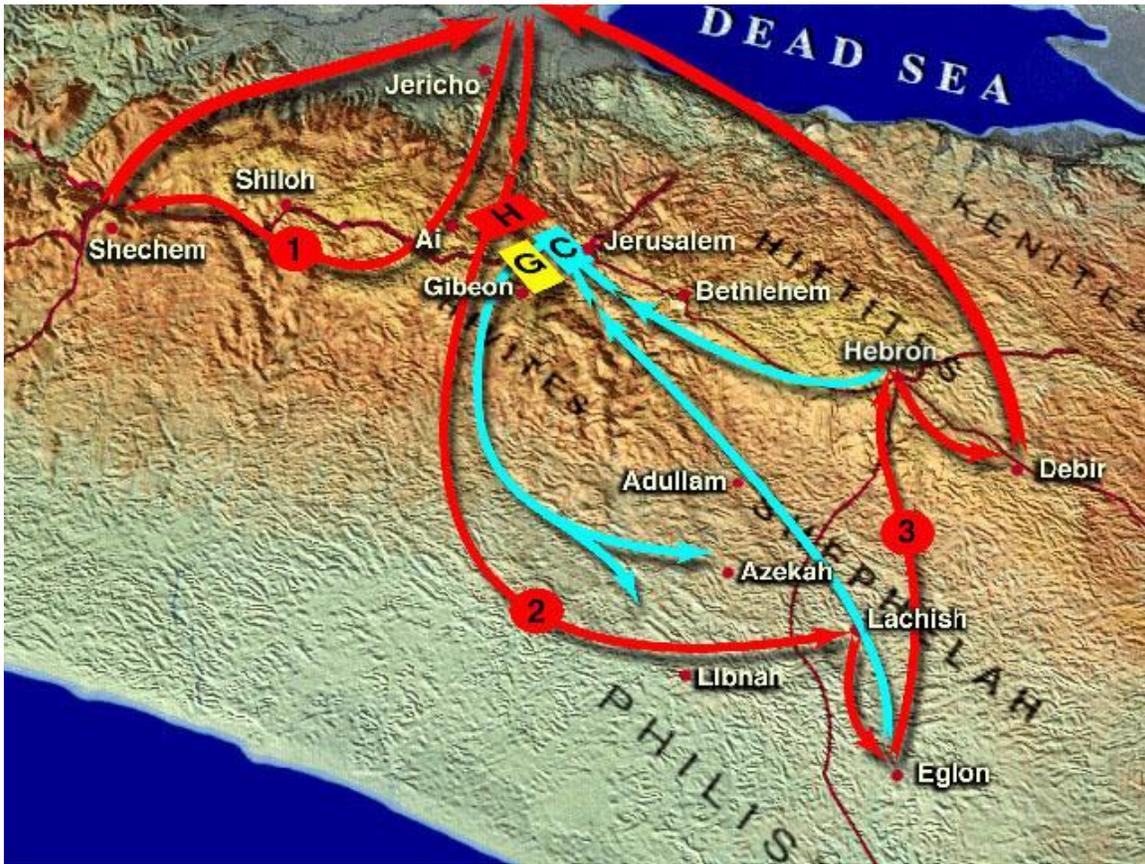


The Book of Joshua



The Conquest of Canaan (Logos Maps)

The Book of Joshua

Bible Study – Good Shepherd Lutheran Church – Collinsville, Illinois

Chapter Eight

1. (8.1-2) The LORD Encourages Joshua to Take Ai by Ambush

How do you think Joshua was feeling following the defeat by Ai and the discipline administered to Achan?

We can be fairly certain that Joshua was probably very unhappy about the whole situation. It would have been very difficult to go back into the fight. How does defeat affect you? Note the phrase “do not be afraid and do not be dismayed.” God said the same thing to Abraham (Gen 15.1), Isaac (Gen 26.24), and to Moses (Num 21.34).

God also encourages Joshua when He says, “I have given into your hand...” This is known as the prophetic perfect tense. It is past tense yet it is referring to the future. The outcome is so sure that God speaks of it as though it has already happened.

How is God’s encouragement different than the popular “No Fear” logos?



Why are the cherem orders different for Jericho and Ai?

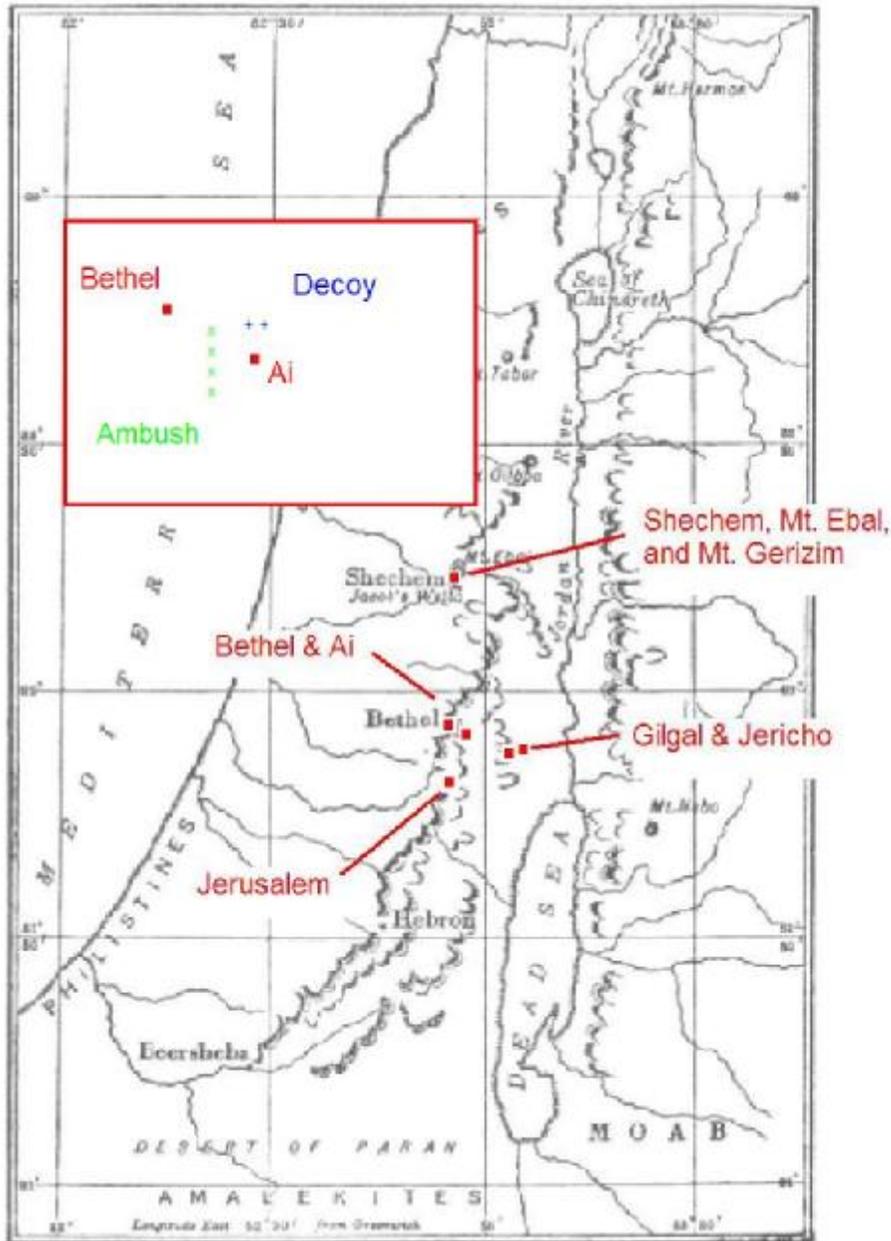
Since Jericho was the first city to be destroyed, it seems to have special significance. Like the “first-born” it was wholly dedicated to God’ judgment. (Remember that “cherem” is the Hebrew word of “a thing dedicated to destruction.”)

2. (8.3-13) Joshua Organizes Israel for Battle

Why is there a difference between the number of ambushers in 8.3 and 8.12?

Joshua provides many details about the battle. This points toward the historical nature of the text. Yet we don't have every detail. Some have suggested that only 5,000 were actually needed to invade Ai. The other 25,000 may have been a contingency force to call on if needed. It is also possible that this is a scribal error. As believers we hold that only the original autographs are inspired. In very rare cases there may be scribal errors. Sometimes these errors can be corrected by looking at different manuscripts and translations.

In this particular battle the ambushers went to the East of Ai. Joshua led a group to the North of Ai. When Joshua fled from Ai, he probably went East toward the Jordan.



Bethel and Ai are important. Abraham pitched his tent between the two cities and received the first promise of the land and the promise of the Messiah (Gen 12.8). Jacob camped here and experienced the dream of the ladder reaching to heaven. The covenant of Abraham was renewed (Gen 28.10-22). In Joshua 12.16 the king of Bethel is listed as a conquered king. No doubt he fell in this battle.

3. (8.14-17) The King of Ai's Bloodlust

What can we learn from the king of Ai's mistake?

Joshua retreated toward the East or Northeast. This meant that the soldiers from both Bethel and Ai would have been drawn off away from the ambushers. Spiritually, the mistakes made by Bethel and Ai remind us of the Bible's warnings against pride, self-confidence, and the fact that Satan is also an ambusher. Just when you think you're winning the battle against him, he catches you from another angle.

4. (8.18-23) Joshua Springs the Trap

What's going on with the "javelin"?

Joshua's signal was to "reach out with the javelin." The term "reach out" in combination with "hand" often refers to God's acts of judgment:

Exodus 7:5 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them.

This also reminds us of Moses, who lifted up his staff to ensure the defeat of the Amelakites in Exodus 17.10-13.

5. (8.24-29) The Memorial of Ai

Why the memorial of Ai?

Israel destroys everything in Ai except for the livestock and booty. The word "Ai" means "ruin." God used Ai to make a special point. Ai was turned into an "everlasting ruin" (8.28). God's judgment is final and uncompromising. All should shudder to think of it.

The king of Ai was killed and hung on a tree. But his body was removed that day according to Deuteronomy 21.22-23. In this passage we are told that keeping the body exposed perpetually would "defile the land."

This same principle plays an important role in the crucifixion of Jesus. He was also taken down and buried on the same day He died (Mk

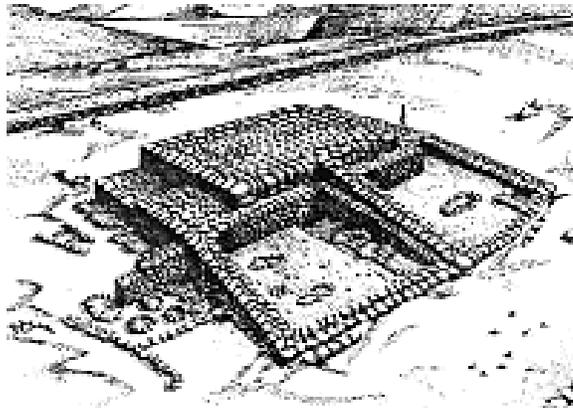
15.42-46; Lk 23.50-54). But most important, Jesus' death is a curse that removes the curse of sin from us.

Galatians 3:13-14 ¹³ Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), ¹⁴ that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

6. (8.30-35) Israel Worships

What is significant about the altar that Joshua builds?

The altar is made from natural stones. This may have been required in order to keep Israel from being tempted to idolatry (shaping the stones into images). For an interesting article on this altar go to www.shechem.org/machon/engevala.html



What two things does Joshua do with the altar?

First he offers sacrifices. But second, he copies the "Torah of Moses" on the stones. 8.32 Literally "Write there on the stones a copy of the Torah of Moses." There are four options...

1. He wrote the entire Torah on the the stones (they were either very large stones or as Rabbi Nachmonides concluded – the fact that the text fit on the stones was a miracle.)
2. He wrote just the book of Deuteronomy on the stones.
3. He wrote just the Ten Commandments on the stones. (NIV)

4. He wrote the blessings and curses of Deuteronomy 27-28 on the stones.

Note how these two things remind us of the Word and Sacrament ministry that continues today in the Church!

What is important about the blessings and curses?

In Deuteronomy 27.5-6 God commanded this altar. He then commanded a "liturgical reinforcement" of the Torah by an unusual worship experience. Six tribes were to assemble on Mt. Gerizim and six on Mt. Ebal. The Levites were to read the curses first, and the tribes on Mt. Ebal were to say "Amen." Then the blessings were read, and the tribes on Mt. Gerizim were to respond with "Amen." Imagine the thunderous sound of the "Amen."



Mt. Gerizim on the left. Shechem in the middle. Mt. Ebal on the right.

Shechem would later be called "Sychar." Here Jesus would meet the woman at the well (John 4). She said, "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain..." Jesus would go on to point out that the worship

of Israel was no longer tied to this land but to Him as the Messiah!