

Joshua: Chapter 8

- V. 1 – Now the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not fear or be dismayed.”
 - SC: Right there is a command. He tells you, don't do something. Don't fear and don't be dismayed. That means you, we have:
 - the capability,
 - the power,
 - the ability
 - ...to not do whatever it is he's saying to not do (in this case, “Do not fear or be dismayed”). So he tells you, “you can stop fearing, don't fear”.
 - Notice that He does not say, “Ask me for strength to help you conquer fear.”
 - Why? You don't need it. You have the power within you to stop the fear or to stop being dismayed, discouraged, defeated, despondent. (That's what “dismayed” is.)
 - Now, what do you *do* to exercise that power and ability to conquer fear? Use the **Tool “Make yourself do, say, or think the exact opposite of what the fear or feeling is motivating you to do, say, or think.”**
 - Contradict the thought, feeling, fear, and emotion verbally, mentally, physically. If the fear is telling you to do one thing, intentionally, as an act of your stubbornness and will, do the *opposite*.
 - It's *amazing* how fear dissipates when a person practices that one tool. Absolutely amazing. And there are other fear tools.
 - **So that's an action: “Do not fear or be dismayed”. Instead practice this Tool.**
 - And it continues: “...Take all the people of war with you and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land.”
- SC: Folks, that is how things were built back then. Things meaning societies, communities, towns, nations. They weren't built like America has built America the past 300 years, 400 years. Well, America was built by conquering the Indians, and the English, and then the Spanish, and the French. But once America was established, the past 100-150 years has been unique. And then America has been built through commerce and business and trade versus conquering and acquiring more land. But what's unique is America already had so much land to conquer, if you will, in this continent. It's an interesting thing. Everybody's always grown by conquering people and their land and acquiring their land, their cities, their property. Even we Americans have to. It's just unique that we've done it more by commerce the past 100-150 years than by displacing or killing off inhabitants. Though, we *did* displace and we *did* kill off it happens for the first 250 years, 300 years.
- V. 2 – “And you shall do to Ai and its king just as you did to Jericho and its king; you shall take only its spoil and its cattle as plunder for yourselves. Set an ambush for the city behind it.”
- SC: An end must require strategy and planning and thought and then execution. And that goes back to that verse up there on the refrigerator, Proverbs 24:3-4.

- V. 3 – So Joshua rose with **all** the people (SC: Notice “all”. So not just a remnant, not a handful of people) of war (SC: that is all those ready, willing and prepared to go out in a battle) to go up to Ai; and Joshua chose 30,000 men, (SC: Now, from all that people, this is what's so cool. He chose or selected 30,000 men valiant warriors, (SC: Now, based on all that...This is what's so cool. He *chose* or selected 30,000 men *based on* them being valiant warriors.) and sent them out at night.
- V. 4 –And he commanded them, saying, “See, you are going to ambush the city from behind it. (Now, what's unique about *that* is, typically, we think of battle and war as going in the *front*. They *did*. They went in the *back*.) Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready.
 - SC: So what's it take to be ready, be prepared? It's not just showing up, expecting to do battle. Be ready mentally, physically, spiritually, every way.
- Verse 5, here's their strategy!
- V. 5 – “Then I and all the people who are with me will approach the city. (SC: from the front. So 30,000 Roman Gallant warriors will be in the back coming in from the back. The rest come from the front.) And it will come about when they come out to meet us as at the first, that we will flee before them. *They* think you're *fleeing*, *they* think they're *winning*, so they *pursue* you. They go *after* you, not *realizing* that they're entering their own demise.
 - SC: Why do they have to flee? It's part of the strategy. This is a *common* tactic of war now. To draw the enemy to where you want them to be so that you, then, can encircle them and annihilate them
- V. 6 – “And they will come out after us until we have drawn them away from the city, for they will say, ‘They are fleeing before us as at the first.’ So we will flee before them.
 - SC: That is, we will go *after* them, pursue them.
- V. 7 – “And you shall rise from your ambush and take possession of the city, for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand.
 - SC: Now, here's what's interesting... So far, he's not *saying* you shall rise from your ambush and kill off the soldiers that pursue this, the enemies that pursued them. He's saying take possession of the *city*. But then he also said, rise from your ambush. Does it say rise from where you were *behind* them? Or is it *after the fact*, after you've *ambushed* the soldiers that pursued us, the enemy that pursued us?
- V. 8 – “Then it will be when you have seized the city, that you shall set the city on fire. You shall do it according to the word of the LORD. See, I have commanded you.”
- V. 9 –So Joshua sent them away, and they went to the place of ambush and remained between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai (SC: Now why is it important to stay on the west side? I don't know.); but Joshua spent that night among the people.
- V. 10 –Now Joshua rose early in the morning and mustered the people (SC: You need to know what mustard means. Look it up, not now, but later.), and he went up with the elders (SC: That's a common term within our military the first 200 years) of Israel before the people to Ai.
 - SC: So the elders, the leaders were with them.
- V. 11 –Then all the people of war who were with him went up and drew near and arrived in front of the city, and camped on the north side of Ai. (SC: So you got the ambushers on the west side and the rest of them on the front of the city, but they camped on the north side.) Now there was a valley between him and Ai.
- V. 12 –And he took about 5,000 men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city.
- V. 13 –So they stationed the people, all the army that was on the north side of the city, and its rear guard on the west side of the city, and Joshua spent that night in the midst of the valley.
- V. 14 –And it came about when the king of Ai saw it (SC: Literally, out in front of him and to his *east*, which was their *west*, and to *north*, which was their *south*. He got in a *hurry*.), that the men of the city hurried and rose up early and went out to meet Israel in battle...

- SC: And the fact that they hurried tells us what? It tells us that they weren't ready. Why? Because they had to *rise up*. They had to get up out of bed. So they're in *reaction* mode. And we all know that when somebody's in reaction mode, they're weaker because they're more *emotionally* driven than *logic* driven. And this is a common tactic in the military to get your adversary, your enemy, in reaction mode because they are likely to make mistakes. And you *capitalize* on their mistakes and beat them or win.),
- And it continues: "...he and all his people (SC: The *king* also went out to meet them. Now, all his people, you can't help but wonder, was that all of the citizens, too?) at the appointed place before the desert plain. But he did not know that there was an ambush against him behind the city."
- V. 15 – (1) And Joshua and all Israel pretended (SC: Key word) to be beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness.
- V. 16 –(2) And all the people who were in the city (SC: The *enemy*) were called together to pursue them (SC: They *thought* they were *winning*), and they pursued Joshua, and were drawn away from the city.
- V. 17 –So not a man was left in Ai or Bethel who had not gone out after Israel, and they left the city ungarded and pursued Israel.
- V. 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." So Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city.
- V. 19 –And the men in ambush rose quickly ...
 - SC: The point here is, when you have a *plan* and you spend a lot of time *planning* that plan and strategy, the worst thing you can *do* is be passive, be too relaxed, procrastinate. You *act quickly* on your plan when the right time hits. When the time is right, you *act* and you act *quickly*. So they acted quickly from their place of ambush. And when he had stretched out his hand, they ran and entered the city and captured it. And they quickly set the city on fire. So they didn't pursue their enemy. They captured their enemy's base of stability and security and supply and strength and safety. Important you can get all those.
 - Why? Because that's what kept them alive for the long term. So you get rid of their supply and their supply chain. And this is what happens in wars. If you can get rid of or in an ally eliminate their supply, you'll kill the army because they cannot be resupplied. You'll kill the enemy because they cannot be strengthened. And you take the wind out of their sails quickly.
- V. 20 –When the men of Ai turned back and looked, behold, the smoke of the city ascended to the sky, and they had no place to flee (SC: Key words, right there. They had no place to flee. Their safety, their security, their stability, their strength, their sustenance was *gone*.) this way or that, for the people who had been fleeing to the wilderness turned against the pursuers.
 - SC: *Now* they turned against their enemy. So they first got rid of or eliminated the enemy's source of strength, stability, security, safety, and sustenance. *Then* they turned *directly* on that enemy.
- V. 21 –When Joshua and all Israel saw that the men in ambush had captured the city and that the smoke of the city ascended, they turned back and slew the men of Ai.
 - SC: So you first get rid of everything that allows them to exist, *then* you eliminate *them*.
- V. 22 –And the others came out from the city to encounter them, so that they were trapped in the midst of Israel (SC: This *had* to be women, children, elderly.), some on this side and some on that side; and they slew them until no one was left of those who survived or escaped.
 - SC: And the point *here* is, eliminate your *enemy* in *every way*. Many times, your enemy is a *person*, it's a *lineage* or a culture. In eliminating that lineage or that culture, you have to eliminate that person and or their people. In a way, this is what businesses do. They want to outperform their competition. Their competition is their enemy. So they can beat them or annihilate them. Many companies will buy other companies for no other reason than to then shut down the other company. Happens all the time.
- V. 23 –But they took alive the king of Ai and brought him to Joshua.
 - SC: So the only one left alive was the king.

- V. 24 –Now it came about when Israel had finished killing all the inhabitants of Ai in the field in the wilderness where they pursued them, and all of them were fallen by the edge of the sword until they were destroyed, then all Israel returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword.
 - SC: Everybody was eliminated that was part of Ai.
- V. 25 –And all who fell that day, both men and women, were 12,000—all the people of Ai.
- V. 26 –For Joshua did not withdraw his hand with which he stretched out the javelin until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.
 - SC: The key point here is not the action that was *done* by Joshua and his people. **The key point is they did what God told them to do. They acted. A key lesson in this whole chapter is obedience.** Just simple obedience.
 - Do what you're told to do. In order to do that, you have to first listen to what you're being told to do so that you truly hear what you're being told to do.
 - That's why the Bible says, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear. He who has eyes to see, let him see." (Matthew 13:9)
 - There's a reason that verse is in there.
- V. 27 –Israel took only the cattle and the spoil of that city as plunder for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which He had commanded Joshua.
 - SC: There it is *again*. They were *obedient*. They *did* what they were told to *do*. This is why God says, **"I desire obedience over sacrifice." (1 Samuel 15:22)**
- V. 28 –So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation until this day.
- V. 29 – (SC: This is important) And he hanged the king of Ai on a tree until evening; and at sunset Joshua gave command and they took his body down from the tree, and threw it, key word, at the entrance of the city gate (SC: Threw it), and raised over it a great heap of stones that stands to this day.
 - SC: Alright, so, this is important. Verse 23, But they took alive the king. Why did they kill everybody but keep the king alive? When they knew they were going to kill him. Why didn't they just kill him anyway? Verse 29 tells us why. Yes, they killed him, but they wanted to have an *example*. They used the king, the guy that possessed all the power, as an example to anyone else of Israel's power and ambition and ability. So they threw his body at the end of the city gate and put on top of it a huge heap of stones that stands to this day. Why? As a *witness*, if you will. But not in a *good* sense. Everybody would know that he was stoned was where the dead body of the king of Ai was and what all that represented for all the *enemies* of Israel and for Israel.
- V. 30 –Then Joshua built an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, in Mount Ebal,
- V. 31 –just as Moses (SC: In other words)... had commanded the sons of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of uncut stones, on which no man had wielded an iron tool; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings.
 - SC: This is a *witness* to God and the power of God in his people.
- V. 32 –And he wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written, in the presence of the sons of Israel.
- V. 33 –And all Israel with their elders and officers and their judges were standing on both sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger as well as the native. Half of them stood in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the LORD had given command...
 - SC: I just want you to see the act of obedience, here. The author of Joshua keeps repeating it. If they keep repeating it over and over again, what does that mean? It means it's important.
 - And it continues: "...at first to bless the people of Israel."

- V. 34 –Then afterward he read (Then there's another “then”. Remember the first statement.) all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse (SC: Both. Not just the good (the blessing)), according to all that is written in the book of the law.
- V. 35 – There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel with the women and the little ones and the strangers who were living among them.