

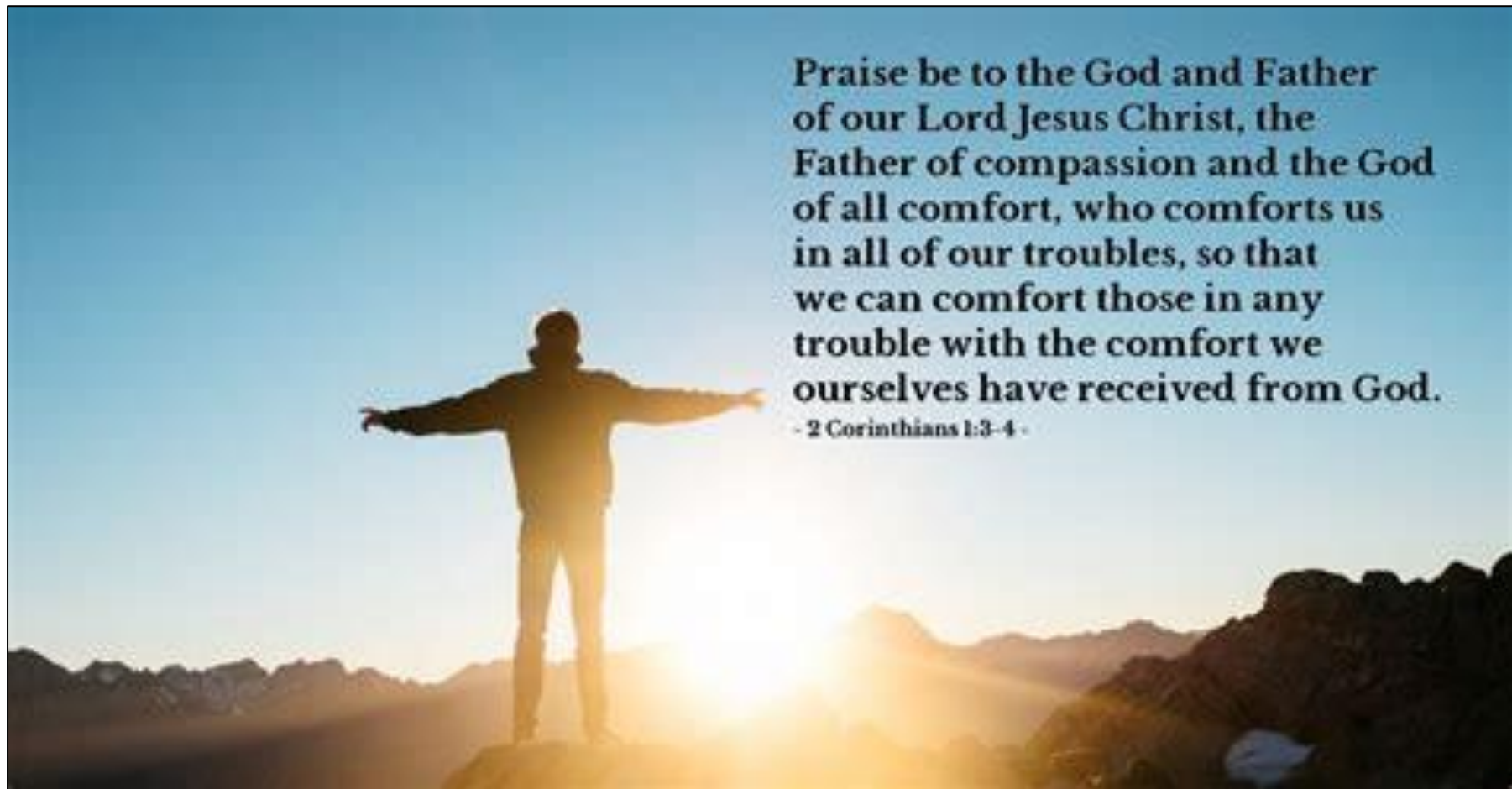
Joshua 8:1-29  
From (apparent) defeat to  
victory



Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

See chapter 1:6

Back to the beginning – a fresh start.



Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For **I have delivered** into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land. You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king, except that you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves. Set an ambush behind the city."



Victory is assured!

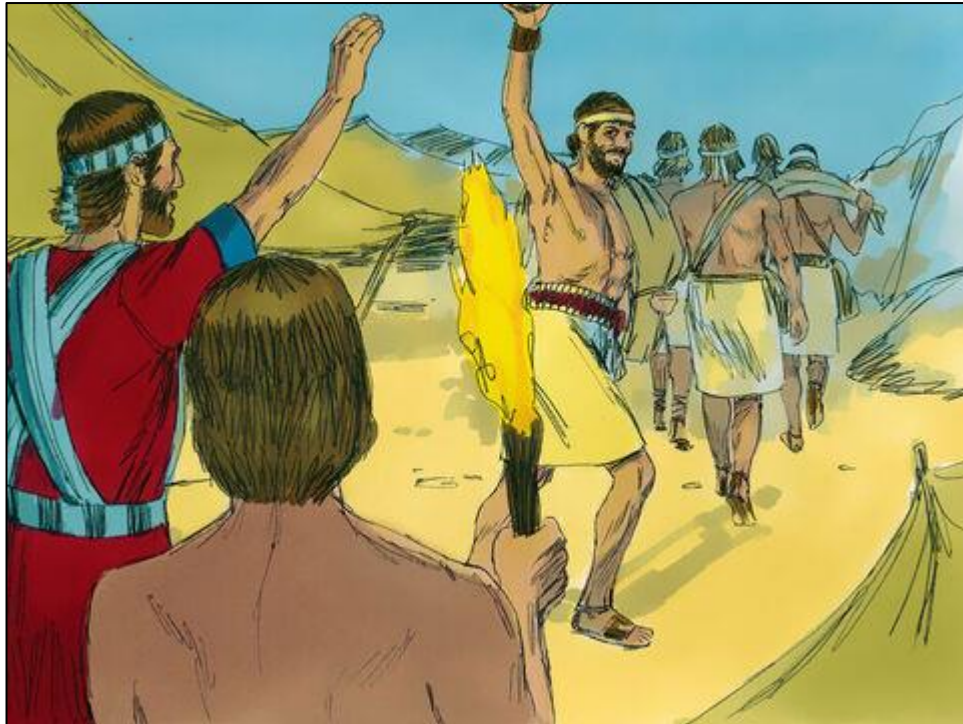
Here are the instructions:

You fight!

Keep the plunder.

Use an ambush strategy.

So Joshua and the whole army moved out to attack Ai. He chose thirty thousand of his best fighting men and sent them out at night with these orders.. "Listen carefully. You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don't go very far from it. All of you be on the alert. I and all those with me will advance on the city, and when the men come out against us, as they did before, we will flee from them.



A selected group of fighters:  
Hide under cover of darkness.  
Have lookouts to watch for what  
the rest of us do.

They will pursue us until we have lured them away from the city, for they will say, `They are running away from us as they did before.` So when we flee from them, you are to rise up from ambush and take the city. The LORD your God will give it into your hand. When you have taken the city, set it on fire.

**Do what the LORD has commanded. See to it; you have my orders.'**



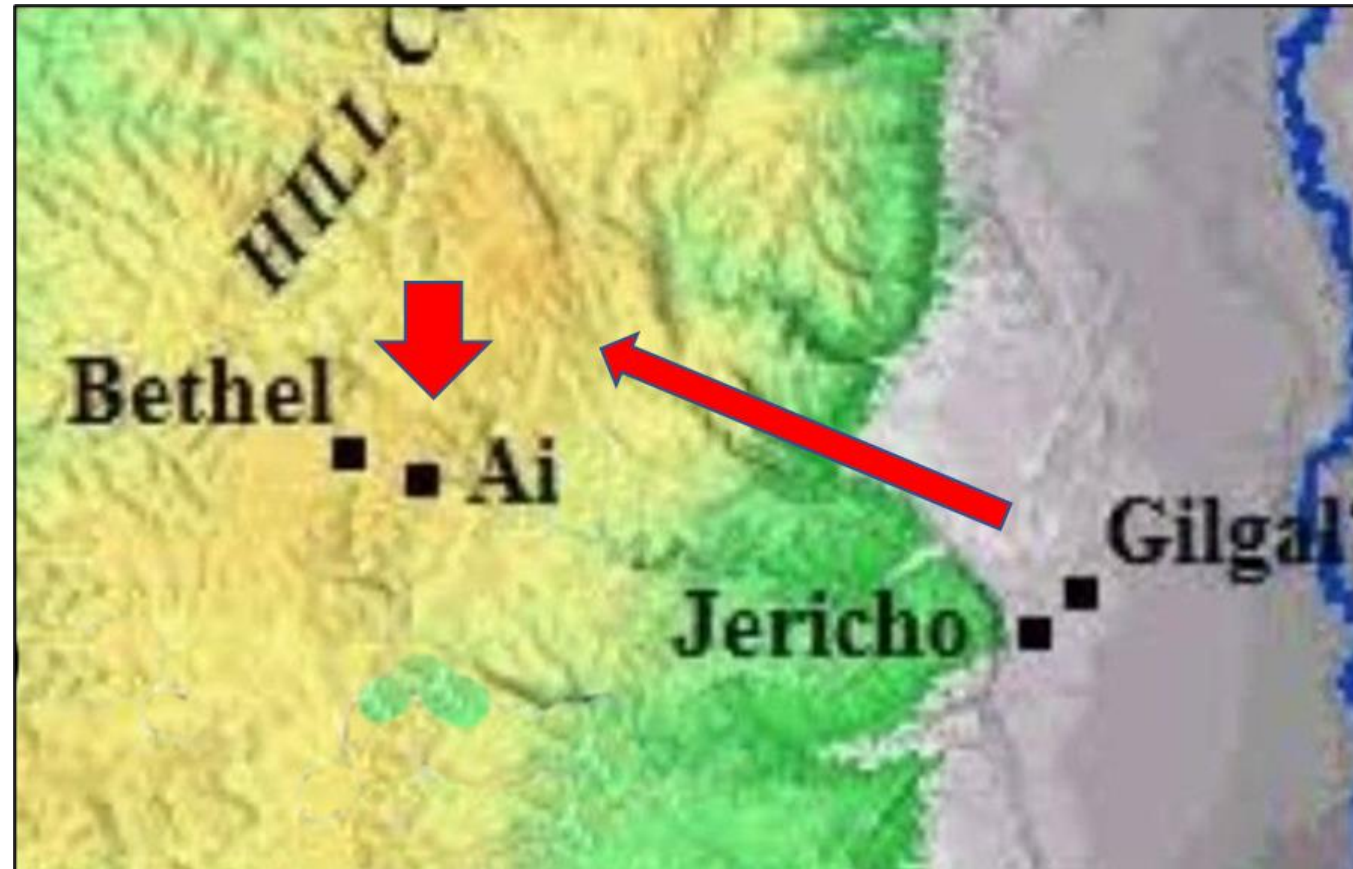
Then Joshua sent them off, and they went to the place of ambush and lay in wait between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai--



-but Joshua spent that night with the people

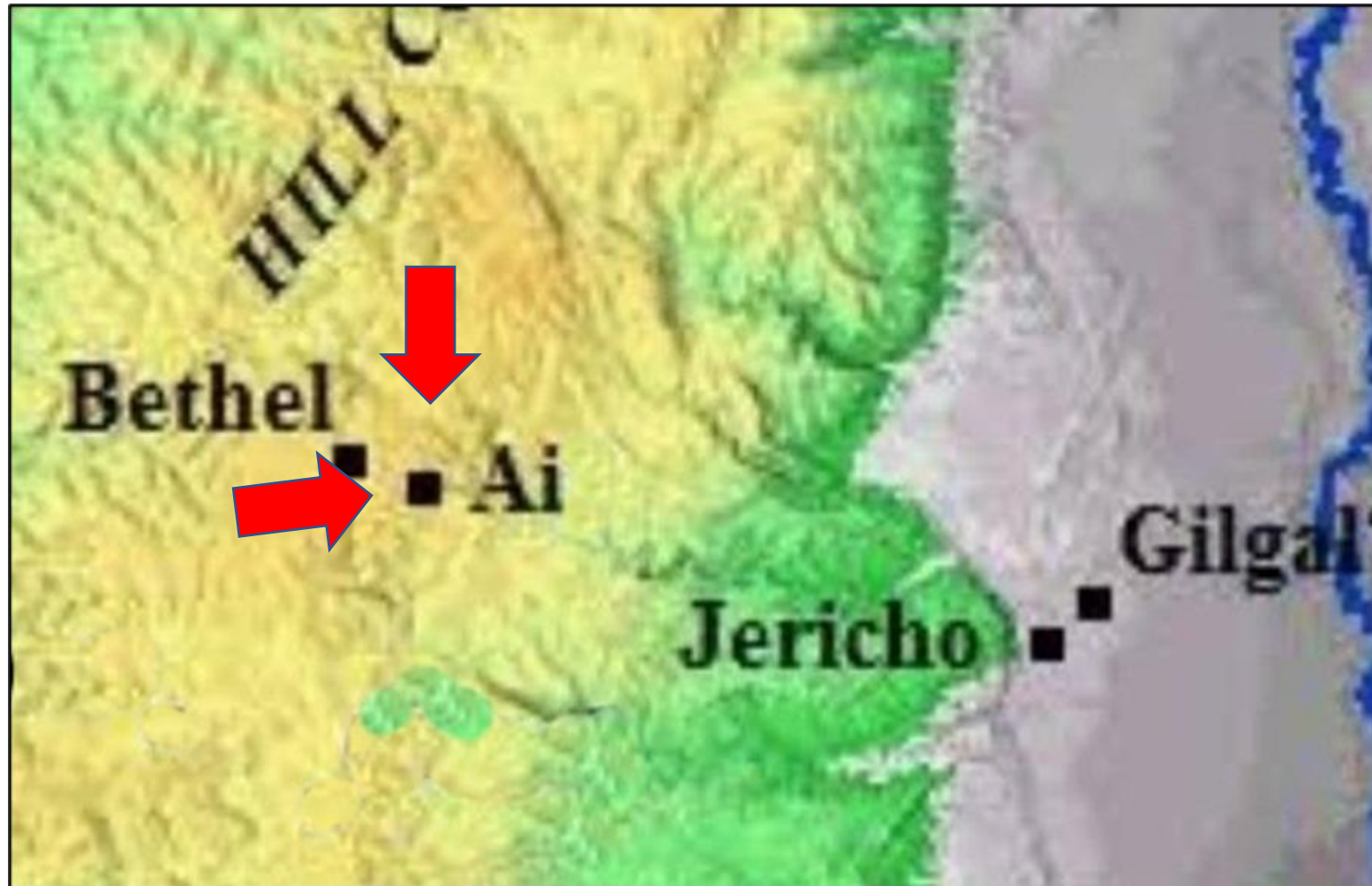


Early the next morning Joshua mustered his men, and he and the leaders of Israel marched before them to Ai. The entire force that was with him marched up and approached the city and arrived in front of it. They set up camp north of Ai, with the valley between them and the city.





Joshua had taken about five thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city. They had the soldiers take up their positions--all those in the camp to the north of the city and the ambush to the west of it.

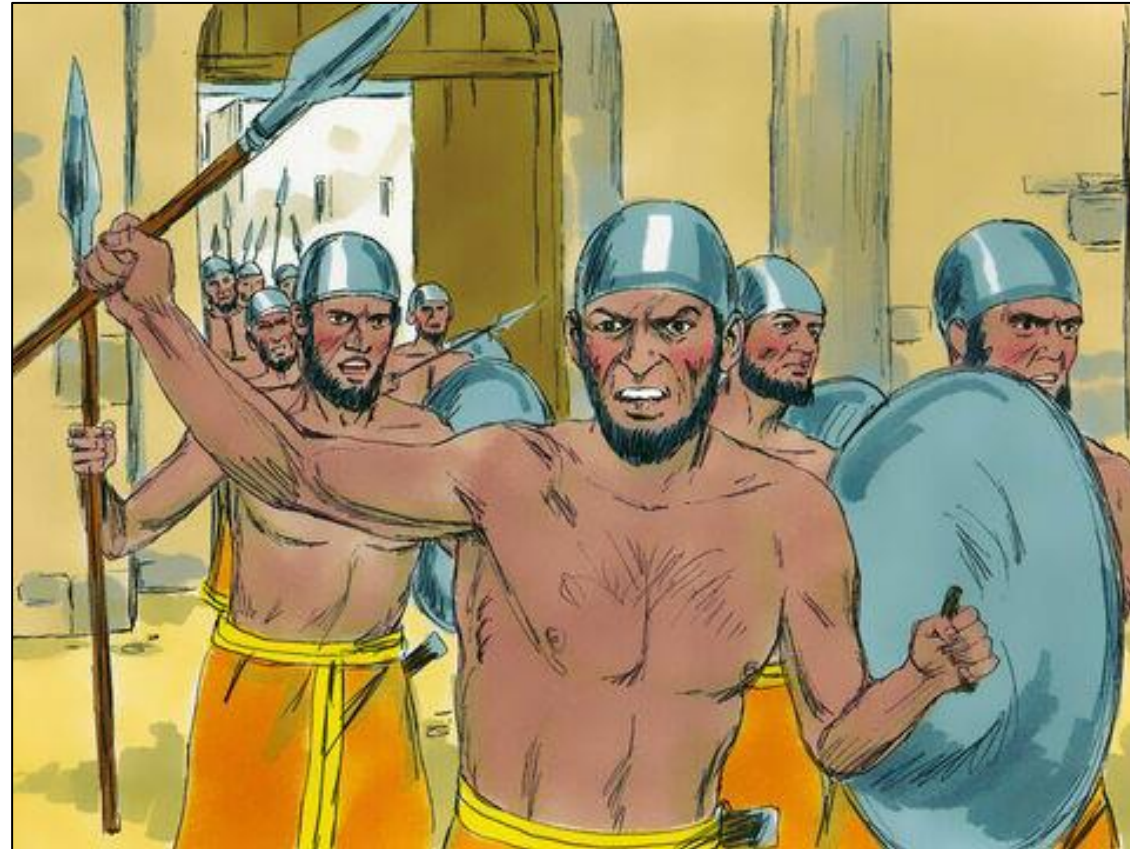


That night Joshua went into the valley.



Taking up positions

When the king of Ai saw this, he and all the men of the city hurried out early in the morning to meet Israel in battle at a certain place overlooking the Arabah. But he did not know that an ambush had been set against him behind the city.



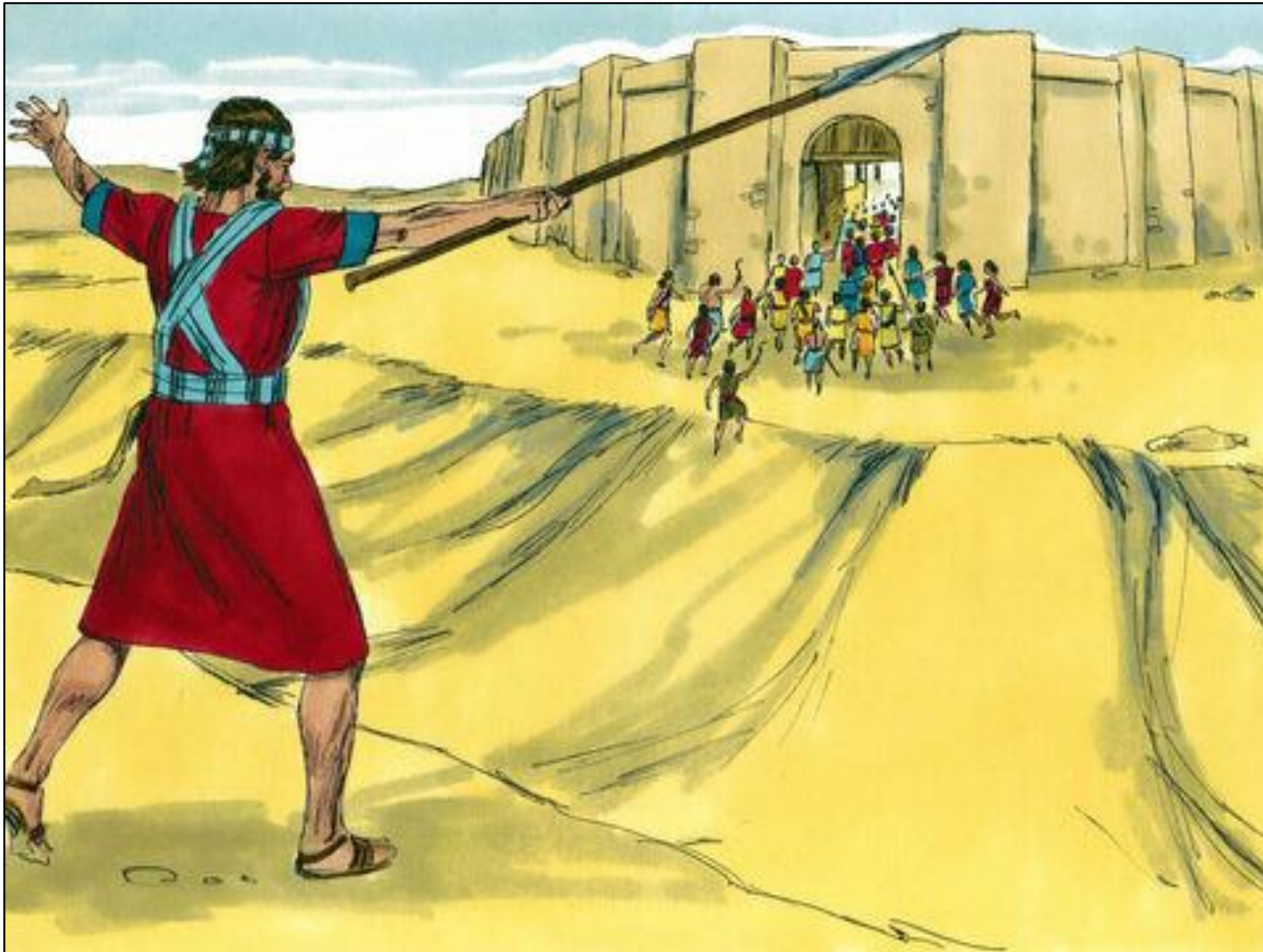
Joshua and all Israel let themselves be driven back before them, and they fled toward the desert. All the men of Ai were called to pursue them, and they pursued Joshua and were lured away from the city.



Not a man remained in Ai or Bethel who did not go after Israel.  
They left the city open and went in pursuit of Israel.



**Then the LORD said** to Joshua, "Hold out toward Ai the javelin that is in your hand, for into your hand I will deliver the city."  
So Joshua held out his javelin toward Ai.



Standing in a prominent position to see the city and also the lookouts could see him  
Not fighting?  
Cf. Moses role with the Amalekites  
Exodus 17: 8-16

As soon as he did this, the men in the ambush rose quickly from their position and rushed forward. They entered the city and captured it and quickly set it on fire.



The men of Ai looked back and saw the smoke of the city rising against the sky, but they had no chance to escape in any direction, for the Israelites who had been fleeing toward the desert had turned back against their pursuers.

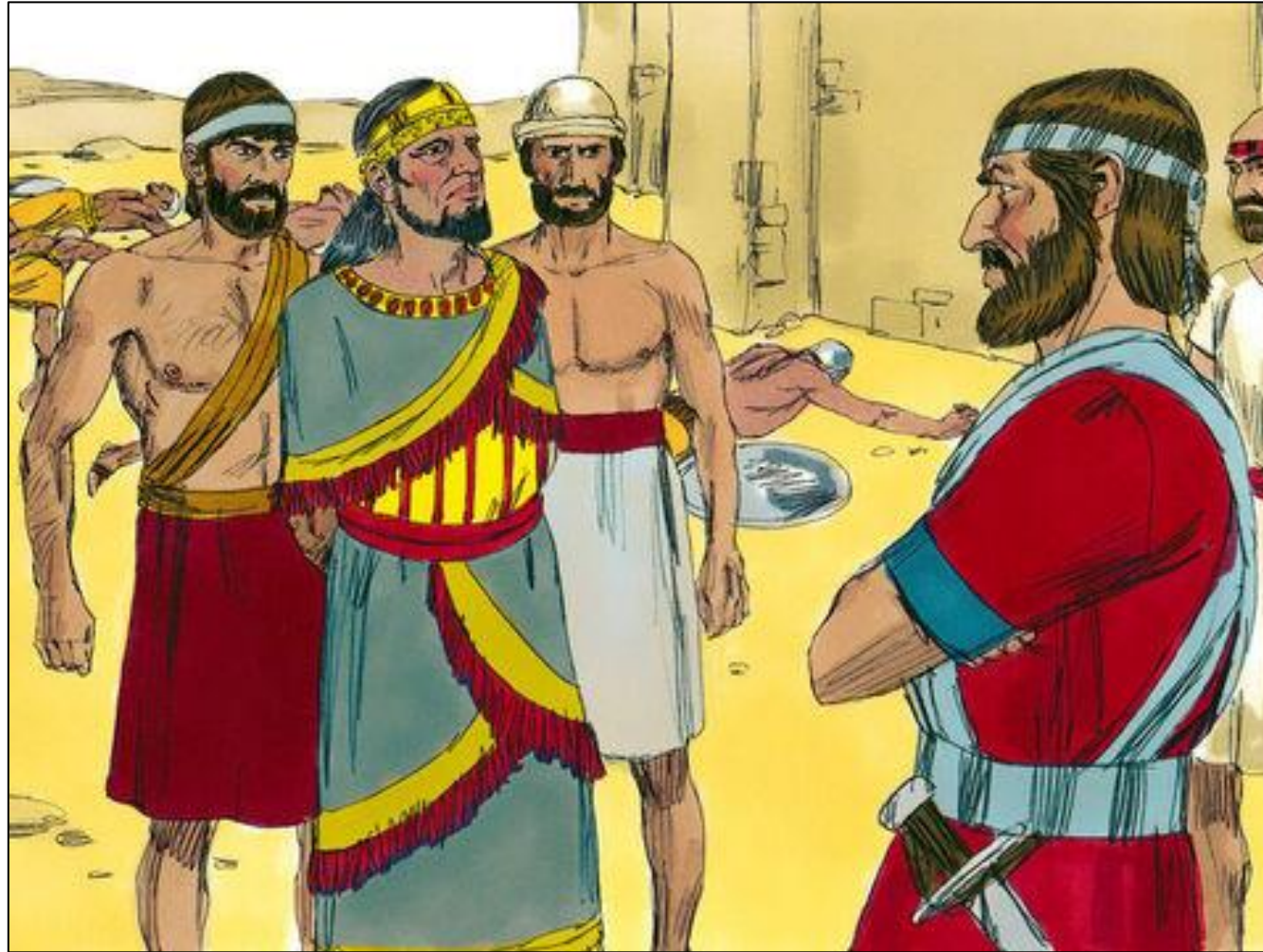




For when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city and that smoke was going up from the city, they turned around and attacked the men of Ai. The men of the ambush also came out of the city against them, so that they were caught in the middle, with Israelites on both sides.

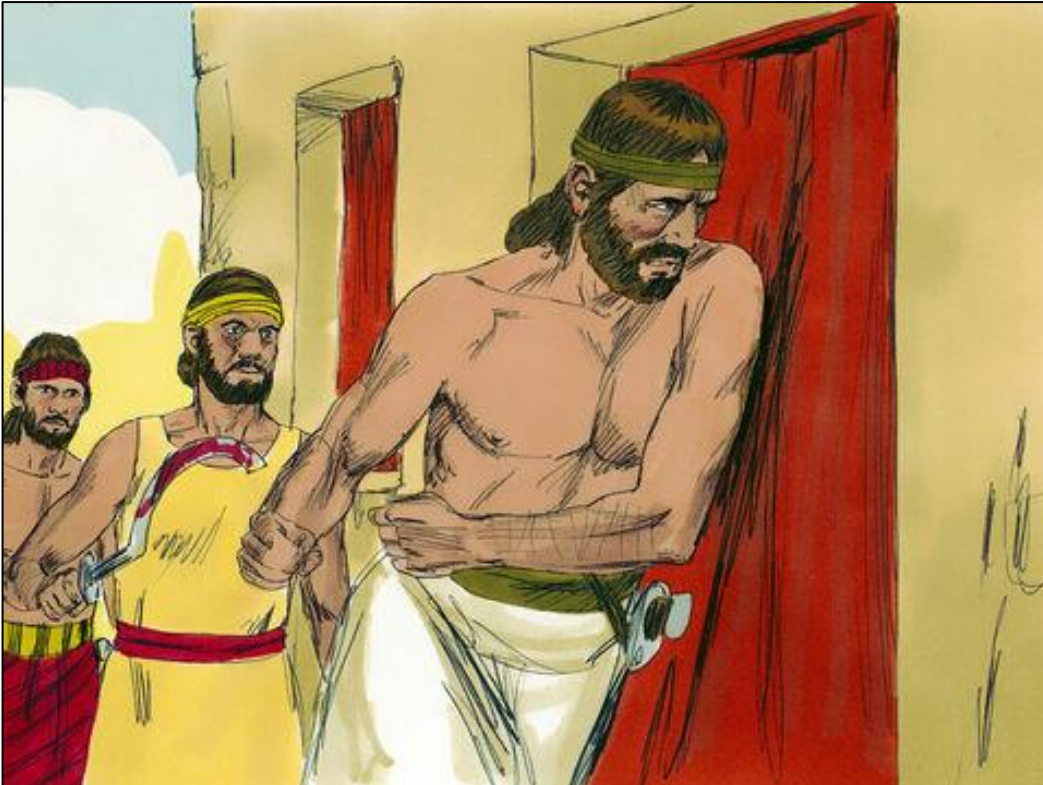


Israel cut them down, leaving them neither survivors nor fugitives. But they took the king of Ai alive and brought him to Joshua.



## Time for judgement had come for the peoples of the land.

When Israel had finished killing all the men of Ai in the fields and in the desert where they had chased them, and when every one of them had been put to the sword, all the Israelites returned to Ai and killed those who were in it.



As we have seen before at Jericho, this was God's instruction they followed.

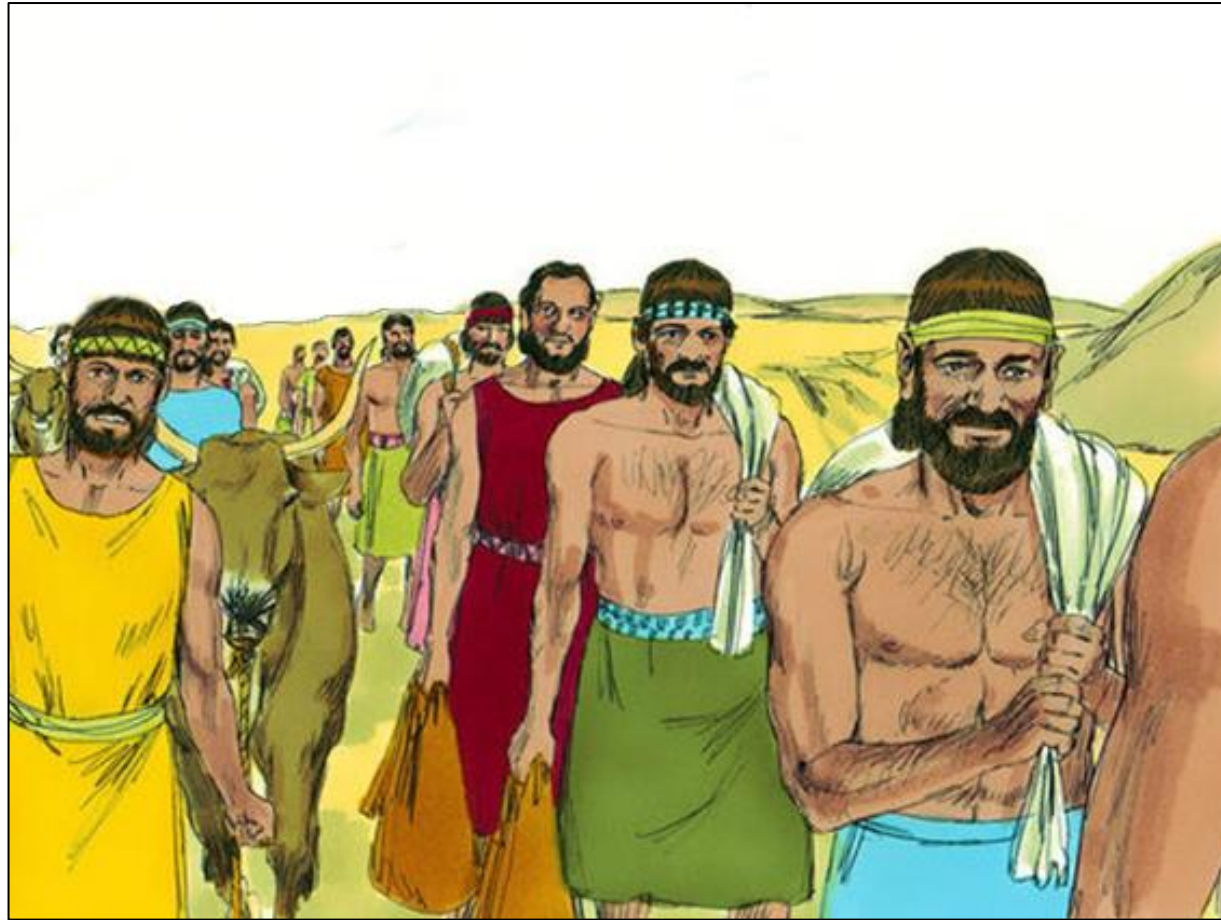
Genesis 15:16 In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.

Twelve thousand men and women fell that day--all the people of Ai. For Joshua did not draw back the hand that held out his javelin until he had destroyed all who lived in Ai.

Unrepented sin is a destroyer

For the wages of sin is death,  
Romans 6:23

But Israel did carry off for themselves the livestock and plunder of this city, as the LORD had instructed Joshua.

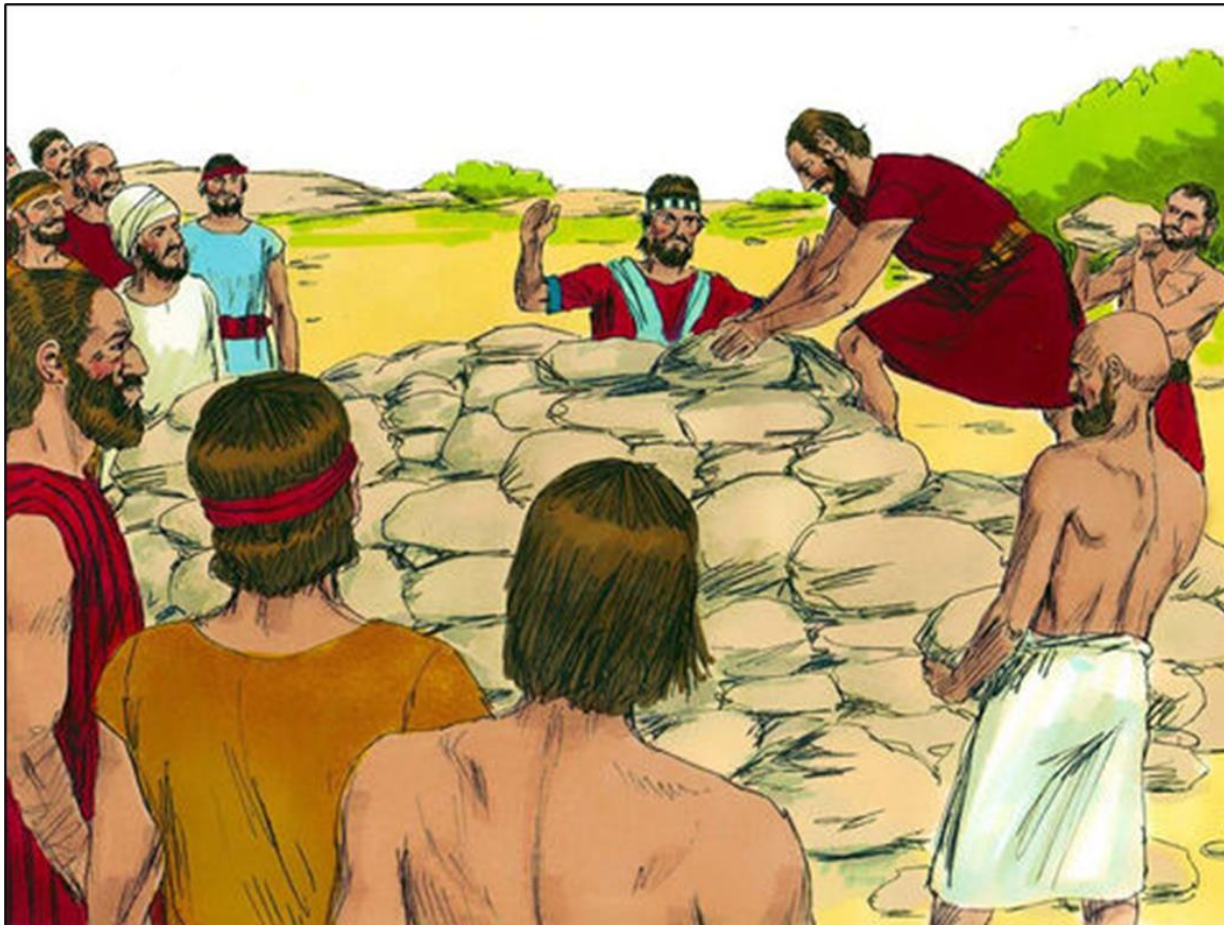


If only Achan had waited!

But Israel did carry off for themselves the livestock and plunder of this city, as the LORD had instructed Joshua. So Joshua burned Ai and made it a permanent heap of ruins, a desolate place to this day.



He hung the king of Ai on a tree and left him there until evening. At sunset, Joshua ordered them to take his body from the tree and throw it down at the entrance of the city gate. And they raised a large pile of rocks over it, which remains to this day.



Until evening:  
Deuteronomy 21:23

A tomb and a witness

## **The results:**

Sin is deadly for Israelites and Canaanites.

Israel was back on track to possessing the land.

Her enemies wouldn't know if the first 'defeat' was planned.

Obedience leads to blessing.



The ambush was in the context of the apparent defeat of Joshua's army as they withdrew.



# The apparent defeat of the cross was the greatest of all victories



Colossians 2:15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

1 Corinthians 2:7-8 We declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.



Our response?

Put sin to death and walk in victory

Romans 8:12-14 Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation--but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.