

The Destruction of Jericho (c. May 1406 BC)

Joshua 5:13–6:27

Jesus—The Commander of the LORD's Army

5:13 And it happened, when Joshua was by Jericho, he looked up, and he saw a man standing opposite him *with* his sword drawn in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said, "Are you with us, or with our adversaries?"

14 And he said, "Neither. I have come now *as* the commander of Yahweh's army." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and he bowed down and said to him, "What *is* my lord commanding his servant?"

15 The commander of Yahweh's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you *are* standing *is* holy." And Joshua did so.

6:1 Now Jericho *was* shut up inside and out because of the presence of the Israelites; no one was going out or coming in.

2 And Yahweh said to Joshua, "Look, I am giving Jericho into your hand, its king and the soldiers of the army.

3 You will march around the city, all the warriors circling the city once; you will do so for six days.

4 And seven priests will bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you will march around the city seven times, and the priests will blow on the trumpets.

5 And when they blow long on the horn of the ram, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people will shout *with* a great war cry, and the wall of the city will fall flat, and the people will charge, each one straight ahead."

The First Day of Walking

6 So Joshua son of Nun summoned the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests carry the trumpets of the rams' horns before the ark of Yahweh."

7 And he said to the people, "Go forward and march around the city, and let the armed *men* pass before the ark of Yahweh.

8 And when Joshua spoke to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the presence of Yahweh went forward and they blew the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh followed behind them.

9 And the armed *men* went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while they were blowing the trumpets.

10 But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "You will not shout, and you will not let your voice be heard; a word will not go out from your mouth until the day I say to you 'Shout!' Then you will shout."

11 And the ark of Yahweh went around the city, circling once, and they came *into* the camp and spent the night in the camp.

The Second Day of Walking

12 Then Joshua got up early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of Yahweh.

13 The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of the rams' horns before the ark of Yahweh went on continually, and they blew on the trumpets. And the armed *men* went before them, and *the* rear guard came after the ark of Yahweh, while the trumpets blew continually.

14a And they marched around the city once on the second day, and they returned *to* the camp.

The Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Days of Walking

14b They did *this* for six days.

The Seventh Day—"Shout, for the LORD has given you the city"

15 Then on the seventh day they rose early at dawn, and they marched around the city in this manner seven times. *It was* only on that day that they marched around the city seven times.

16 And at the seventh time the priests blew on the trumpets, and Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For Yahweh has given you the city.

17 The city and all that is in it will be devoted to Yahweh; only Rahab the prostitute and all who *are* with her in the house will live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent.

18 As for you, keep *away* from the things devoted to destruction so that you do not take them and bring about your own destruction, making the camp of Israel an object for destruction, bringing trouble upon it.

19 But all of the silver and gold, and the items of bronze and iron, *are* holy to Yahweh, and they must go to Yahweh's treasury."

The Fall of Jericho

20 So the people shouted, and they blew on the trumpets. And when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, they raised a great shout, and the wall fell flat. The people charged, each one straight ahead into the city, and they captured it. [[Heb 11:30](#)]

21 And they utterly destroyed by the edge of the sword all who *were* in the city, both men and women, young and old, ox, sheep, and donkey.

22 Then Joshua said to the two men who spied on the land, "Go *to* the prostitute's house and bring out from there the woman and all who belong to her, just as you swore to her."

23 So the young men who were spies went and brought Rahab and her father and mother, her brothers, and all who were with her.

And they brought all her family out and set them outside the camp of Israel.

24 And they burned the city and all that *was* in it with fire; they put only the silver and gold, and the items of copper and iron, *into* the treasury of the house of Yahweh.

25 But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute and her family and all who *were* with her, and she has lived in the midst of Israel until this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. [[Heb 11:31](#)]

Joshua's Curse

26 And Joshua swore at that time, saying, "Cursed *is* anyone before Yahweh who gets up and builds Jericho, this city. At the cost of his firstborn he will lay its foundation, and at the cost of his youngest he will set up its gates." [cf. [1 Kgs 16:34](#)]

27 So Yahweh was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.

The Sin of Achan (c. May/June 1406 BC)

Joshua 7

The First Attack on Ai

1 But the Israelites broke faith concerning the devoted things. Achan son of Carmi son of Zabdi son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took from the devoted things; and Yahweh's anger was kindled against the Israelites.

2 Now Joshua sent men from Jericho *to* Ai, which *is* near Beth Aven, east of Bethel, and he said to them, "Go up and spy out Ai." And the men went up and spied out Ai.

3 And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up and attack Ai; *only* two or three thousand men should go up because they *are* few. Do not make all the people weary *up* there."

4 So about three thousand from the people went up there, and they fled before the men of Ai.

5 The men of Ai killed about thirty-six of them, and they chased them from the gate up to Shebarim and killed them on the slope. And the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

Joshua Panics

6 And Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the ground on his face before the ark of Yahweh until the evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads.

7 And Joshua said, "Ah, my Lord! Why did you bring this people across the Jordan to give us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content and stayed beyond the Jordan.

8 Please, my Lord! What can I say after Israel has fled from its enemies?

9 The Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear *of this*, and they will surround us and cut off our name from the land. What will you do, for your great name?"

Sin in the Camp

10 And Yahweh said to Joshua, "Stand up! Why *have* you fallen on your face?

11 Israel has sinned and transgressed my covenant that I commanded them. They have taken from the devoted things; they have stolen and acted deceitfully, and they have put *them* among their belongings.

12 The Israelites were unable to stand before their enemies; they fled from their enemies because they have become a thing devoted for destruction. I will be with you no more unless you destroy the devoted things from among you.

13 Get up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow. Thus says Yahweh the God of Israel: "*There are* devoted things in your midst, O Israel. You will be unable to stand before you enemies until you remove the devoted things from your midst."

14 In the morning you will come forward, tribe by tribe, and the tribe that Yahweh will select by lot will come forward by clans, and the clan that Yahweh selects by lot will come forward by families, and the family that Yahweh selects by lot will come forward one by one.

15 The one caught with the devoted things will be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him, because he transgressed the covenant of Yahweh, and because he did a disgraceful thing in Israel." "

Achan's Sin is Revealed

16 So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought forward Israel, tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was selected by lot.

17 And he brought forward the clans of Judah and selected the clan of the Zerahites by lot. Then he brought forward the clan of the Zerahites, one by one, and Zabdi was selected by lot.

18 He brought forward his family, one by one, and Achan son of Carmi son of Zabdi son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was selected by lot.

19 And Joshua said to Achan, "My son, please, give glory to Yahweh the God of Israel, and give him a doxology in court. Tell me, please, what you have done; do not hide *it* from me."

20 And Achan answered Joshua and said, "It is true. I have sinned against Yahweh the God of Israel, and this is what I did:

21 I saw among the spoil a beautiful robe from Shinar, two hundred shekels of silver, and one bar of gold *that* weighed fifty shekels; I

coveted them and took them. They *are* hidden in the ground inside my tent, and the silver *is* under it.”

22 Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there *they were*, hidden in his tent, and the silver *was* under it.

23 And they took them from the tent and brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites. And they spread them out before the presence of Yahweh.

Achan’s Entire Family is Destroyed

24 Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the bar of gold, his sons and daughters, his cattle and donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and everything that *was* his, and they brought them *to* the valley of Achor.

25 And Joshua said, “Why did you bring us trouble? Yahweh will bring you trouble on this day.” And all Israel stoned them *with* stones; and they burned them with fire *after* they stoned them with stones.

26 Then they placed on top of him a great pile of stones *that remains* to this day. And Yahweh turned from his burning anger, and thus the name of that place to this day is called the valley of Achor.

The Destruction of Ai (c. June 1406 BC)

Joshua 8

Preparations for the Second Attack on Ai

1 Then Yahweh said to Joshua, “Do not fear or be dismayed. Take all the fighting men with you and go up immediately to Ai. Look, I am giving into your hand the king of Ai, his city, and his land.

2 You will do to Ai and its king that which you did to Jericho and its king; you may take only its spoils and livestock as booty for yourself. Set for yourself an ambush against the city *from behind it*.”

3 So Joshua and all the fighting men went up immediately to Ai. Joshua chose thirty thousand of the best fighting men and sent them *by* night.

4 And he commanded them, saying, “Look, you are to lay an ambush against the city from behind. Do not go very far from the city and be ready.

5 Then I and all of the people who *are* with me will approach the city. And when they go out to meet us as before, we will flee from them.

6 They will come out after us until we draw them away from the city, because they will think, ‘*They are* fleeing from us as before.’ So we will flee from them.

7 Then you will rise up from the ambush and take possession of the city, for Yahweh your God will give it into your hand.

8 And when you capture the city you will set it on fire as Yahweh commanded. Look, I have commanded you.”

The Ambush is Set

9 So Joshua sent them out, and they went to the *place of the* ambush, and they sat between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai; but Joshua spent the night with the people.

10 Joshua rose early in the morning and mustered the people, and he went up *with* the elders of Israel before the people of Ai.

11 All the fighting men who *were* with him went up and drew near before the city and camped north of Ai; *there was* a valley between him and Ai.

12 And he took about five thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city.

13 So they stationed the forces; all the army *was* north of the city while the rear guard was west. But Joshua went that night to the middle of the valley.

The Trap is Sprung

14 When the king of Ai saw *this*, the men of the city hurried and rose early and went out to meet Israel for battle—he and all his army—to the meeting place before the Arabah. He did not know that *there was* an ambush for him behind the city.

15 Then Joshua and all Israel acted like they were beaten before them, and they fled in the direction of the wilderness.

16 All of the people who *were* in the city were called to pursue after them. As they pursued after Joshua, they were drawn away from the city.

17 Not a man remained in Ai or Bethel who had not gone out after Israel; they left the city open and pursued after Israel.

18 And Yahweh said to Joshua, “Stretch out the sword that is in your hand to Ai, because I will give it into your hand.” And Joshua stretched out the sword that was in his hand to the city.

The Fall of Ai

19 The moment he stretched out his hand, those in the ambush stood up quickly from their place and ran. And they went *into* the city and captured it, quickly setting the city ablaze with fire.

20 Then the men of Ai looked behind them, and they saw smoke from the city rising to the sky; they had no power to flee this way or that, and the people fleeing the wilderness turned around to the pursuers.

21 And Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had captured the city and that the smoke of the city was rising; they returned and

struck down the men of Ai.

22 Then the others from the city came out to meet them, and they found themselves surrounded by Israel, some on one side, and others on the other side. And they struck them down until no survivor or fugitive *was* left.

23 But they captured the king of Ai alive, and they brought him to Joshua.

24 When Israel finished slaughtering all the inhabitants of Ai in the open field, in the wilderness where they pursued them, and when all of them had fallen by the edge of the sword until they all had perished, all Israel returned *to* Ai and attacked it with the edge of the sword.

25 All the people that fell on that day, both men and women, *were* twelve thousand—all the inhabitants of Ai.

26 For Joshua did not draw back his hand that was stretched out with the sword until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.

27 Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of Yahweh that Joshua commanded.

28 So Joshua burned Ai and made it an everlasting heap of rubbish, a desolate place until this day.

29 The king of Ai he hanged on a tree until the time of evening, and as the sun went down Joshua commanded *them*, and they brought down his dead body from the tree. Then they threw it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and they raised over it a great heap of stones *that remains* to this day.

Joshua Carries Out Moses' Instructions (see Deut 27:1–8)

30 Then Joshua built an altar on Mount Ebal for Yahweh the God of Israel,

31 as Moses Yahweh's servant commanded the Israelites, as *it is* written in the scroll of the law of Moses: "an altar of unhewn stones *on* which no one has wielded an iron implement." And they offered burnt offerings on it and sacrificed fellowship offerings.

32 And there Joshua wrote on the stones *a* copy of the law of Moses, which he had written, in the presence of the Israelites.

33 Then all Israel, foreigner as well as native, with the elders, officials, and judges stood on either side of the ark before the priests and the Levites, who carried the ark of the covenant of Yahweh. Half of them *stood* in front of Mount Gerizim, and the other half in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses Yahweh's servant had commanded before to bless the people of Israel.

34 And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the curses, according to all that was written in the scroll of the law.

35 There was not a word from all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before the assembly of all Israel, and the women, the little children, and the traveling foreigners among them.

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