

***Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas***  
***Fredericksburg Bible Church***  
*107 East Austin*  
*Fredericksburg, Texas 78624*  
*830-997-8834    [jthomas@fbgbible.org](mailto:jthomas@fbgbible.org)*

**B0907 – February 15, 2009 – Victory At Jericho, Defeat At Ai**

We're continuing to work through the time between Mt. Sinai and the Reign of King David, this period of about 450 years we call the Conquest and Settlement. We're going to review because there's a lot of background for understanding the **Conquest and Settlement**. It's a very misunderstood section of the Bible. You will hear critic after critic attack Biblical Christianity because God is such a meanie in the OT. When they say, "God is such a meanie in the OT," you can bet your last dollar they're talking about the Conquest and Settlement. This is just as controversial a section of the Bible as Creation is. Both involve misunderstandings of the framework, and that's why we have to keep going back and reviewing these basic truths until they just won't depart from us. We have to train in these events over and over and over because the attacks against them are virulent and they never slow down, it's just a constant barrage of garbage. So we review, it's military training, real training is repetitive and that's one thing the military has a virtual monopoly on today and we're trying to work our way into their training methodology. We have to because you never learn things the first time around, usually we half-learn it and when we get in a jam we resort to some gimmick, make a big mess, and finally after the 30<sup>th</sup> time we finally figure out what's going on. That's the way we are, that's why God calls us sheep. So that's why we review.

I'd like to throw up a question for discussion: What are the essential differences between the Bible and paganism regarding evil, suffering and death? What are some of the elements that we want to be sure we understand if we get into a discussion in our own soul over this issue. We have to remind ourselves, we're made of flesh and apart from the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit we would be pretty good pagans ourselves. So it's a struggle that starts in our own hearts and it's a struggle

that affects our environment, our families, our community, classes, work place, etc. Think through this stuff because these issues come up again and again, and we could cite hundreds of passages of Scripture. It's important to memorize Scripture. It's important because the Holy Spirit uses memorized Scripture, but it's also important to think through the big picture of what is going on. Paganism and the Scripture are two completely different viewpoints, and they differ in a thousand ways, but at the core there are certain essentials, and that's what we want to concentrate on; you want to train yourself to get back to the core differences between paganism and the Scriptures. You can get lost in the details. I'm not asking you to explain all the details, but what are the big differences when you come to evil, suffering and death?

The remarkable thing is that apart from the Bible evil has no boundaries. It is ONLY in the Bible that evil is bounded. That's remarkable. Evil, suffering and death has a beginning in Scripture, a beginning that is after Creation. If we had evil at Creation, then we'd have a problem. It's this period that makes the Bible revolutionary, that period of time between the time of Creation and the Fall does not exist in any other system of thought. It's so terribly important because it shows that the physical universe that we live in originally existed without death; that it existed without pain, without crying, without suffering. Those are not part and parcel of life. Those are strange additions to the universe. Evil started with a creature rebelling against a prior order that was there originally. And then it is separated by a judgment and at that point good and evil will be eternally separated. That's part of the good news. And it's that part of the good news that forms the background for the Conquest and Settlement.

While it's a critical part of the good news it's a part that hurts because it's a separation. How is that going to take place? Ultimately what's involved is the cross of Jesus Christ. The dilemma is how do you separate evil from evil doers? How do you destroy evil without destroying evil doers; the way of salvation given in Scripture is God's solution to that problem. By having us trust in Christ who generated perfect righteousness in space and time, a righteousness that is not our own but is external to us. Think of this, God sent Christ, who is genuine creature and God too, but He sent him into the world, this fallen world zone, and He walked the face of this earth and He did it perfectly. He is the only man who has ever lived His life inside that zone

perfectly. So Jesus was unique. He lived and breathed the same air we breathe, walked the same planet that we walk, talked human languages, faced temptation, and He did it in that bracket zone. He, in an evil world, remained outside of the evil. And the only time that Christ ever came into personal contact with sin was during those dark hours on the cross. Then He came in contact with all of it. So the life of Christ in the four Gospels is a remarkable story. We have to be careful, we get used to the story to the point that it becomes so familiar that we don't see the power and the uniqueness and appreciate it. Familiarity breeds laxness, and as Christians we have to be careful we don't start taking for granted the depth of the truths of Scripture.

Evil starts here, and it's going to be separated here. If you go to the idea there is no personal Creator but just an impersonal universe, then you have this. It's just this eternal mixture of good and evil. There's a mixture of good and evil in our view too, but what's the difference? What two key words have we used to describe the difference over how we view the mixture? Abnormal and normal. In the pagan view that mixture is normal. That's just the way things are forever and ever and ever. In the biblical view that mixture is abnormal. When you get called to the bedside of a loved one who is dying, and you look at them and see the horror of death, the word "abnormal" should spring into your heart, this is abnormal. Because the evil one, at that point in your life, when you see that kind of suffering, particularly if it's a family member that's close to you or a loved friend, the evil one will immediately slip the thought in, "God is unfair to allow this, how dare God permit this, or how dare God permit the suffering of this person, how dare God permit this child to die, how dare God allow this earthquake" you can add anything you want to, "How dare God permit it." "Excuse me, but how did it all start?" We've got to keep coming back, how did it start? When you see somebody dying, ask yourself, "Where did that process get started? Was it there when the universe left God's fingertips, is that what God said on the sixth day? "I just made a junkyard?" No, it was good, very good. Death wasn't there then. So how did it get there? If you'll just go through that mental exercise it will keep you straight when you face evil. Believers when faced with suffering have bought hook, line and sinker the satanic line that somehow God is responsible for all this. They never got this straight. So, this is not a theoretical point, this is everyday, street level reality.

What we're doing by going back to the Fall and the question of good and evil is setting up the framework for understanding the Conquest and Settlement period because here we have the annihilation of evil, a separation is at work. Why does God authorize the total extermination of men, women, children and even animals? Whole societies are just obliterated and it's a bloody mess. It doesn't appear very nice of God to do that. And this is where the critics attack. So we have to answer that.

Turn over to Deut 20. Here's the declaration of holy war. We want to review this. Hopefully you'll see the application of the Christian life but first I want to make sure we are all familiar with these texts. We want to look at some of the details. Deut 20:16. Prior to verse 16, in verses 13, 14, 15, are the rules of engagement for cities *outside* the land. But in verse 16 it gets into the rules of engagement *inside* the land. There's a geographical difference in how war is carried out and the difference hinges on the location of your city with reference to the borders of Israel's land. It says, "Only in the cities of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes." Let that sentence sink in. "You will not leave alive anything that breathes." Verse 17, "But you shall destroy completely the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the LORD your God has commanded you." Verse 18, "In order that they may not teach you to do according to all their detestable things which they have done for their gods, so that you would sin against the LORD your God." Notice why in verse 18, good and evil have got to be separated, and God is going to separate it. It may be very messy while He's doing the separating, but they will be separated.

So this holy war is a revelation of what that separating process looks like. It's an example, a scaled down example of what's going to happen when Jesus Christ returns. It's not going to be very pretty when He returns, because He will, by force, take over the entire planet earth, by the sword! There will be no negotiations, no peaceful coexistence, no discussion between the god of this world and the God of heaven. There will be an all-out, blood holy war. That's necessary. If that doesn't occur, then evil has no solution in Biblical terms. What I want you to see, and we'll repeat and repeat this, because later when we come to this business of living the Christian life and sanctification I don't want you at that point to conclude, as we do so often in some of our Christian circles, that sanctification is just a social adjustment problem, it's just living

a moral life or something. It's a lot bigger than that, there are cosmic issues here; the whole question of evil is wrapped up with sanctification in the Christian life. If we're wrong, if it's not true that good and evil have to be separated, then there's no hope. This is what's so hard to grasp. If good and evil aren't going to be separated then evil is going to continue to exist forever and ever and ever. So the very fact that we have a separation means we have pain, because getting rid of the evil is painful. You have to choose then, do we go through pain to get rid of the evil, and have peace ultimately, or do we put off getting rid of it and as long as we put off getting rid of it, what happens? We prolong it, we actually contribute more to the mess and we have to live in it.

That's what this holy war is all about. And that's why He says in verse 17, I want you to utterly destroy them, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, those societies had reached the end of grace, they had rejected God, rejected God, rejected God and now it was time for judgment. Now here's a question. Written inside here, occurring in that general portion of the Bible between Exodus and Judges, in this period there's another book that was written in that time about something that seems utterly unrelated to holy war, written during the period of the Judges, was the book of Ruth. What do you suppose, just from what we've said now, why do you think the Holy Spirit included the book of Ruth in the middle of this bloody messy period of war? Ruth was a Gentile. What is the argument of the book of Ruth? Look carefully at verse 17; I will destroy the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. And there's another woman mentioned in this period, she was from Jericho, a very prominent woman in Scripture, Rahab. Was she a Jew? No. What are these women doing in the pages of Scripture? Were these women scheduled along with the other people to be destroyed? Their people were scheduled for destruction but there were individuals within those people groups that were not on the same schedule. They're coming out from the people who were damned. This is a remarkable thing, this is what you miss when you read little pieces of the Scripture and you don't put it together. There's a reason why the book of Ruth is included in the Canon of the OT. There's a reason Rahab is given large place in the Jericho event. It's to balance out understanding. What could you conclude from verse 17 that is corrected, if you also think about the book of Ruth and Rahab? The conclusion is that Ruth and Rahab believed, and having believed they were judicially removed from the sentence of doom

in verse 17, because verse 17 was put upon a people who have hardened their hearts, and the damnation comes because of the hardness of their hearts. But these two women are examples of individuals in damned cultures who took the same basic information that their nation had, and responded positively to it. So what do these two women's lives become arguments against? If we didn't have the Ruth and the Rahab examples, what attack could we get criticized for? As an unbeliever how could you construct an argument to attack the God of Scripture? God would have been unfair because He just arbitrarily, without giving anybody a chance, condemned every last one of them to damnation. But the balance is what do you do then about Ruth and Rahab, they grew up in that culture; their lives become a counter argument for the fact that if these gals did it anybody could do it. Look at the environment of Rahab, what kind of business was she in? Prostitution. And yet this woman has an amazing story. Remember Joshua sent a couple of spies to Jericho, they show up at the local brothel to get some information. Rahab's establishment. What did she let them know as they milled around gathering intelligence data? She spilled the beans about the mentality of the culture of the people, and she knew their culture, believe me, she had lots of customers. All the guys were talking, so she knew what they were thinking, and what did she tell them? She said for years we've been sitting here terrified of you people. We heard what YHWH did to the superpower Egyptians at the Red Sea. And we're afraid. And yet what were the Jews doing all during that period? They were afraid to go into the land. The people on both sides were afraid. So here you have the revelation by a woman who very well knew what was going on, they got the real scoop from Rahab; she knew what she was talking about. And what she becomes is a massive intelligence source for Joshua.

Joshua suddenly realized that God had already psychologically defeated these people. These people had been defeated for an entire generation; they could have gone in 30 years ago, but they got psyched out by this struggle in the Christian life. And because of the struggle in the Christian life I'm going to cop out, when in fact the powers and principalities are terrified because Jesus Christ has died and has risen again. They know that, they know it better than Rahab knew about the Canaanites. See the power this gives you in the Christian life? The principalities and powers know that Jesus left this planet in His physical body in a resurrected body and now sits far above them on the high ground. They know that and they know it better than any one of

us. But they would have us believe, through their insidious whisperings into our hearts, that we're the defeated ones; that we have to fear them because they control history, that our God is distant and not concerned with us, He doesn't care for us in our daily life. But all the while they're whispering those ideas into our hearts they know the real situation. They have the right assessment.

So this is a picture of a larger cosmic scheme. This is why this period of the Conquest is so dramatically important for your mental attitude in the Christian life of renewing the mind. It gives us vivid pictures, easy to remember, children can remember these pictures, you don't have to remember reams of theology, you just have to get your handle on three or four of these Biblical stories and just imagine it in your mind, go through it, read the Scriptures, just soak in a couple of these things and you'll find tremendous strength comes out of this.

What we're seeing in this event of holy war, the Kadesh-Barnea event and the Jericho event. We want to move into some of the Jericho event. Most of us have heard about Jericho but there's something about the Jericho passage that I want to show you. A little background from a military point of view of what's going on here. You have a map of Israel, the Sea of Galilee, the Dead Sea, the Mediterranean. They were originally going to come up in an attack from the south, from Kadesh-Barnea. But they failed to trust and so by the time of Joshua they had fiddled around for forty years, and then they came in from the east. In military warfare there are several principles that have to be followed for victory. One of them is you have to command the high ground, because it's easier to shoot down. In Israel there are mountains that run north and south, that's the high ground in Israel. Whoever controls the high ground controls the land. Jerusalem is the high ground. If you go to Jerusalem you realize why the NT says "They went up to Jerusalem," because it's the high ground no matter what direction you're coming from. And that's why Jerusalem is such a stronghold. Militarily, everyone who goes up against it has to fight up hill. And that means heavy casualties.

So Joshua is coming in from the east, and he has to capture the high ground. If you follow the campaigns in the Bible, his plan is to secure high ground just west of the entry point, then he's going to move south, and he's going to move north along the high ground, a classic military tactic. Spiritual

application: Where is Jesus Christ in His resurrection body, relative to Satan? He's on the high ground; He ascended to the right hand of the Father, that's the argument of the Book of Hebrews. The gateway to the high ground across this valley was guarded by a city called Jericho. Jericho was the key city, it was the military fortress that guarded the land, so it was the strategic city, the number one target of Joshua's forces. That city had to be breached in order to get the Israeli army onto the high ground. Joshua knows that; he's getting his soldiers to come up to that point.

In Joshua 5:13 we have a strange conversation. What's going on here? The camp has crossed the Jordan and they're outside Jericho. Apparently Joshua's got his military strategy for taking this city all worked out. Then just before this invasion of the high ground a strange conversation takes place. Why do we have this conversation at this time? Joshua 5:13-15, "Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" <sup>14</sup>He said, "No; rather I indeed come now *as* captain of the host of the LORD." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?" <sup>15</sup>The captain of the LORD'S host said to Joshua, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so." Who is this captain? That's the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ. This is an OT Theophany of the angel of the Lord who shows up often as a man. But what's striking about the conversation? First, notice verse 13, Joshua is like a sentry on duty, he has soldiers over here and he sees somebody strange over here and in classic military fashion he challenges the Stranger's allegiance? In war the most important question is "Whose side are you on?" The question we want to play with in our heads a little bit is why did Jesus answer Joshua the way He did? Can you think of why He said that? He could have said, "Well, I'm on your side." Why instead did Jesus say that "No, I am captain of the host of the LORD," in verse 14? He does not answer the interrogation question of Joshua. Now Joshua is the commander, he is the captain of the armies of the Lord. The Israeli soldier's uniforms have the Hebrew letters that are translated IDF, which means Israeli Defense Forces, but in Hebrew it says "the hosts of the land of Israel," that's the same Hebrew word. The word "hosts" means armies, it means a group of soldiers. We get too religiously confined when we hear host, we think of the angels of the Lord



and that kind of thing, but actually the word “host” is a military term and it means a group of warriors, an army. This is why the angels are said to be in hosts because the angels apparently have military rank, they’re organized into a hierarchy within the Lord’s army.

Why in vv 13-14 does this particular conversation take place? How do we explain that funny response that Joshua gets? Go back to the question in v 13. Remember how we talked a long time back about not answering loaded questions, like how many times did you beat your wife last week, because no matter how you answer you incriminate yourself because you’ve already bought into the structure behind the question. There are some questions we ought not to answer. We should redefine the question and then answer the redefined question. That’s what’s so wrong with a lot of the public school examinations, where they force Christian kids to answer some stupid question that’s already loaded against the Christian position. Imagine in verse 13, “Are you for us or are you for them?” Who’s taking authority? Joshua is. The issue then immediately is that the whole question is wrong. Because in verse 14 who outranks who in this conversation? Jesus Christ. And He answers in effect, “Look buddy, I’m on My own side. I don’t answer to your interrogation, you’re a nice guy, good general and all that, but I don’t answer to you, you answer to Me.” I outrank you, I’m the captain of the army and I give you the strategy. You carry out My command.” Now who’s the authority? Isn’t it striking that as Joshua is about to carry out his cleverly devised strategy to take the high ground WHO comes on the scene and says, “Alright, let’s get back in rank. Who’s the real authority? And it’s Jesus Christ who is the authority, not Joshua.

After that grand question is settled, then we go into the tactics, and then He gives Joshua the most bizarre set of tactics that an army has ever seen. You know the story, walking around Jericho. It sounds completely absurd. What in Joshua 6:16 I want you to look at is a verb tense. When you study the Bible one of the things that you always want to ask yourself is the tense of the main verb. Is it past, present or future? Look at the verb in verse 16, “And it came to pass at the seventh time” they walked around Jericho, “when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, ‘Shout! For the LORD *has given* you the city.’” What tense verb is used? Past tense! Had they been given the city yet? Not historically, not temporally, but the reason that verb is past tense is because in the mind of God it’s been done, so it’s just a matter

of carrying out the operation. In the mind of God, it's done; I've given it to you. Joshua recognized that because he's submitted to the Authority and the whole thing takes place, all because, starting from the Commander in Chief in 5:14, there is a submission to the authority of Jesus Christ. And then the whole thing just plays out.

We learn out of that something that's very interesting. God gave a test at this point, because this is their first battle, they're going to have many battles along this high ground, we'll study some of them but this is the first battle they face in this generation. The other battles were when Moses was living and Joshua was a young man, now Moses is dead, Joshua is in charge and this is his first battle. So it's very important that these believers understand how to fight spiritual battles in such a dramatic way that the lessons picked up won't be bad habits picked up. When you get victory in war sometimes you learn the wrong lesson.

I'm afraid that we in America have learned the wrong lesson; in Desert Storm it wasn't even a contest, it was a clear overwhelming victory, but the sad thing most people don't realize is everything was perfect. We've never had a case that somebody was so stupid as to try to start a war and give us six months training time right in the environment. We could do all the training we needed, for six months guys could do nothing but drill, drill, practice airplane runs, practice tank runs, etc., until they were so tired of practicing they wanted the war to get it over with. We were in a desert environment and the smart weapons work great in a desert environment; they don't work great in a European environment where there are clouds, smoke and rain. So everything worked fine and we can get a very arrogant attitude, "Oh, we could do that again." Oops, be careful, things change, don't learn a wrong lesson from a victory. God doesn't want them to learn the wrong lesson, so at Jericho He gives them a lesson in military tactics that He wants them to carry up here, so regardless of what the strategies are, whatever the weapons are down through this high ground campaign to the north, and high ground campaign to the south, they're going to have different terrain, different opponents, and He wants them to remember something up here, because this is where the battle rages, this is where we win or lose the battle. We can have a gun, go out and practice, bang, it works and the guy drops dead, we did it. Look what we did. And that's a wrong conclusion, that's a bad lesson to learn. So there's a subtle thing that begins to happen, "Oh, cause-effect, this is just

pushing buttons, no problem, I don't have to rely on God to push buttons." So we get so enamored with ordinary cause-effect that we no longer depend on the Lord. When you read the NT God asks us to do some things that appear to be very stupid things, why do things this way? That doesn't make any sense to me. We'll see some more today with Paul's missions strategy. And we don't do it because we think it's unimportant to the larger scheme. So we just do it our way and we keep doing it our way and of course we miss God's blessing but we keep trudging along getting mediocre results at best.

So what He has them do is this inane walking around the city. Can you imagine their army? If you were a theatrical type you could have a ball with this, dress everybody up in full battle array and have them walk around the walls of Jericho, the people inside the walls laughing, "Ha-ha, look at these clowns out there." Except for the seventh time they weren't laughing. So the lesson for the Christian life, what has been recognized by so many devotional writers goes back to this event and the period of the Conquest, Thomas Scott, an old writer, very classical, says, "When the Lord effects His purposes by such means and instruments as we deem adequate, our views are apt to terminate upon them, and to overlook Him 'who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.' To obviate this propensity, the Lord sometimes deviates from the common tract and works by methods or instruments which in themselves appear not at all suited to produce the intended effect; nay, sometimes have no real connection with it.' I think we can see that at this point God has taught their army a lesson. Do things my way and you'll get results.

Now we come to the next event, and the next event is their **Defeat at Ai**. They followed the Lord faithfully at Jericho but at Ai we learn the opposite lesson. Did they learn the lesson of Jericho correctly or not? Now, the book of Joshua has a structure it. It's a three-fold structure and if we were teaching Joshua verse by verse we'd see the structure over and over. Notice the three steps. 1) "Yahweh said," in other words, every time a major battle is going to happen in the book of Joshua it has this form to it, "Yahweh says." 2) "and Joshua did," Joshua does whatever Yahweh said and 3) "the people did." The author is the Holy Spirit and when He writes Scripture this way He intends it to teach us something. He's teaching us a pattern of how He works. Yahweh said, Joshua did and the people did! What is interesting if you do a vocabulary search you'll notice that in chapter 7, the defeat at Ai, the pattern

is broken, Yahweh doesn't say, Joshua doesn't do, and the people are defeated.

The very grammar of Joshua 7 doesn't follow the grammar of the other chapters. That tells us there's something terribly wrong at Ai. Ai is one of the cities up on this high ground, Ai is west of Jericho. It was important that they conquer Ai. We know what happened; there was a man who had taken booty, the sin of Achan, he hid some of the war booty in his tent. They weren't supposed to take booty. Why do you suppose armies classically took booty? The U.S. can at least go down in history as a military that when we conquered peoples we did not rape them of all their resources, we gave it back to them ten-fold; at least we can have that as a pleasant picture and we can be proud of that as Americans. But why historically do you think armies took booty? To pay their soldiers. They had to have income, war costs money; they had to pay their soldiers, they had to have food, they had to make up for personal losses, and they had to have some money. What does that imply? If the Hebrew army marches into this land and acts like a pagan army and takes booty, what are they confessing? What would that policy show? That God doesn't supply all their needs. See the spiritual lessons in all this? That's why the heathen read this section of Scripture and they get all bent out of shape because all they see is the battle. They haven't got the spiritual eyes to see the details of what's going on in the text.

The idea of the booty isn't just theft, that's trivial, it's a faith issue! This Achan character isn't trusting the Lord to supply his need; the Lord's trying to carry out a military op here and one of the soldiers has to break rank, disobey orders to get some extra goodies. And God says "No, you're not going to get any goodies, if I allow you to get goodies you're going to go into the next battle and half the army is going to be looting. And then after that you've learned the lesson that I don't supply your need, that you can supply your own need, and when you get to that you've already compromised your whole spiritual life, so I'm not going to let you get away with that." So this is why we have the lesson of Ai. God and the nation Israel are in a Father-Son relationship and the Father expects perfect obedience, not partial obedience. We're not going to have the Son running around disobeying authority; that will just breed rebellion. There's an authority structure here and you can do hard time or you can do easy time but time you will do. You can learn it now or learn it later but it does no good to let your children get away with

violating authority. It just breeds a rebellious heart. God could not let them get away with this rebellion at Ai. And this is why this three-fold pattern is missing in chapter 7:1-5. Yahweh didn't say anything, Joshua and the people just did and they did in their own strength outside the authority structure. By verse 5 they are completely routed and they go into psychological defeat until the sin of Achan is rooted out and God lowers the boom. Achan is taken out of the assembly, discipline takes place and then they can function again. Clearly, the Holy Spirit is warning us through the Ai event that pseudo-obedience won't cut it. Real obedience from the heart is what matters before God. You can fake it, you can put on a superficial adherence to social standards while your heart is in rebellion against Him. But He's not going to bless that kind of attitude. That's the lesson at Ai.

It's so easy because there's pressure, there's social pressure, we generate it ourselves, there's social pressure to behave certain ways, to meet a certain criteria. I'm not saying the criteria are wrong, but here we are, going through life and there are other people out here watching, and we feel pressure, we feel pressure that we have to act certain ways, peer pressure. Everybody out of Jr. High knows that. And the problem with it is that if we learn to respond to that as the motive, all we're doing is projecting what we want people to see, and we're not dealing with the heart issues. And that's what God wants to deal with. But just putting on a front is betraying an even deeper problem isn't it. What is it we've done in our heart if we're only concerned with what people see? We've started to re-engineer our doctrine of God, especially His omnipresence. Isn't God wholly in every space? Who are you really hiding from? He's already in every hiding place. So we, just like Adam and Eve, try to hide from God, but by hiding from God we've already maligned His character. So the Christian life, in this sense, if we look at these OT lessons, is very relaxing because God wants us to be "us." He knows all about our sin, He's omniscient; you can't hide your crud from Him so there's no reason to be phony because He knows all about that. His Son died for that, so we can be honest with Him. That doesn't mean spill our guts to everybody, but it does mean that the Bible places the emphasis upon our relationship with Him, and what other people think; we'll let them think what they want to think. That's the issue there.

In Ai they went through all the motions, had the army in place, went through all the military tactics, but what did they forget? What God said to their heart, and they paid a price, and they were defeated.

So we've seen the true obedience at Jericho as they followed a most unlikely military tactic on their trek to the high ground. That's what happens when we follow the Lord fully. At Ai there's partial obedience, there's external obedience but it's not from the heart and there's defeat. Next week we'll deal the Longest Day at Aijalon and if you want to read ahead, that's Joshua 9-10, and then skip to Judges 1-2 for Doom at Bochim. Those are the sections for next time, and after that we'll start to distill the principles in the doctrine of sanctification, spiritual growth in the Christian life.

[Back To The Top](#)

Copyright (c) Fredericksburg Bible Church 2009