

# delivered

I stand just beyond the flickering edge of the camp at Gilgal. The night air closed in around me, thick with the scent of dying fires and unsettled dust. Before me, the land of promise stretches under a starless sky. This ground the Lord swore to give us shifts uncertain beneath my feet.

Behind me, warriors who once charged forward with fierce confidence now hunch over low flames. No one speaks the name of Ai aloud, yet its shadow clings, our dead brothers strewn on the slopes seared into memory. We marched out bold, certain of victory, only to flee back broken and fewer.

The firelight cast drawn and grim expressions on my commanders' faces. They do not inquire about battle plans tonight. In the distant hills, Ai still stands defiant, its walls untouched, and with it, a raw, sobering dread descends upon the men.

The valley of trouble rises before my eyes, the fresh pile of rocks heaped over the place of execution. One man's hidden sin cost lives. The encampment now sits hollow and reverent, cleansed but shaken. No one doubts the Lord's holiness anymore.

The burden of leadership settles deep in my bones. As the commander of Israel, I must answer before the Lord for every soul in my care.

The men wait, paralyzed. We have learned the terrible cost of moving without the Lord's command.

The ground remains ours by promise. That truth has not changed. Yet in the tense stillness, one question burns hot in my chest: Will the Lord speak again? Will He go before us once more, or has the conquest already slipped away?

I keep my gaze fixed on the dark, jaw tight.

Then I hear Him.

The Lord speaks.

delivered

definitions

Using a Bible app or the word glossary at the back of this book,  
look up each Strong's number to find the definitions.

bethel

STRONGS DEFINITION | H1008

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Joshua 8:9 So Joshua sent them out. And they went to the place of ambush and lay between **Bethel** and Ai, to the west of Ai, but Joshua spent that night among the people.

They were defeated in Ai, wiped out, because of sin in the camp.  
The devastation was great.

Then...

THE LORD TAPPED AGAIN ON JOSHUA'S  
SHOULDER

## decode the text

Read Joshua 8:1–2

Observe the verses. Compare and contrast these verses with the previous battles of Jericho and Ai. What is different this time?

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Read Joshua 8:3–17

Consider the position of Israel, the enemy, and Joshua in this section. Verses 9 & 13 highlight Joshua's position in the narrative. Why is this significant to the battle plans?

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Read Joshua 8:18–23

How does the timing of the ambush, the javelin signal, and the burning of Ai show God's control of the battle versus human action?

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Read Joshua 8:24–26

What does the complete destruction of Ai teach about the consequences of sin and the certainty of God's justice in covenant warfare?

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## IN THE *valley*

The troops had taken their positions. The ambush lay hidden in the dark. But Joshua left the camp and went down alone.

The commander of Israel stood between his people and the city marked for judgment. The battle would rage at sunrise. The javelin would stretch out. The enemy would fall. But first, there was a valley. First, there was the night. He spent the night in the valley.

It was the shadow before the cross. Before the wood. Before the outstretched arm. Before the final victory. There was a garden.

Jesus walked into the dark while the disciples slept. The weight of what was coming pressed against His chest: wrath, sin, separation, the full fury of justice. He did not run from it. He did not summon twelve legions of angels.

He fell to His knees.  
He poured out His soul.  
He accepted the cup.

He stood alone in the gap between His people and the enemy.

Our greater than Joshua was in the valley on that night. His time of walking among his people was complete. Now, in the Garden of Gethsemane, the hour had arrived. The battle was set, and He chose obedience.

“My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done” (Matthew 26:42).

In the valley, surrender sealed the victory. In the garden, submission secured redemption. By morning, the javelin stretched out. By noon, His arms stretched wide. The enemy was devoted to destruction.

But the triumph began in the dark. In the valley. In the garden. Alone.

He stood alone in the gap for us so we will never stand alone again.

# *but Joshua*

DID NOT DRAW BACK HIS HAND WITH  
WHICH HE STRETCHED OUT THE JAVELIN  
UNTIL HE HAD DEVOTED ALL THE  
INHABITANTS OF AI TO DESTRUCTION.

Read Joshua 8:30–35

Consider Deuteronomy 27:5–6. This was an act of obedience, and the first sacrifice in the Promised Land. Remember, what would bring Joshua “good success” according to Ch. 1:8?

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After victory, the assembly listened to Joshua read the law (8:33–35).

How does public covenant instruction reinforce faithfulness and prevent future defeat?

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What does this teach about the importance of community accountability in God’s covenant?

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AND YOU SHALL WRITE VERY CLEARLY

*all the words*

OF THIS LAW ON THESE STONES YOU  
HAVE SET UP.”

## wield the sword

In Joshua 7:12 Israel “could not stand before their enemies.” How does Joshua 8:1 reverse that reality, and how does Romans 5:6 describe our condition apart from Christ?

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Genesis 3:15 promises a coming crusher of the serpent. How does 1 John 3:8 show that Jesus fulfills that promise by entering the very territory of defeat?

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“But Joshua spent that night among the people.” Philippians 2:6–8 and Hebrews 4:15. What does this reveal about how Christ entered our condition?

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Joshua 8:26 emphasizes that he did not lower his hand until the enemy was destroyed. How do John 19:30 and Hebrews 2:14–15 show that Christ likewise completed the work fully and finally?

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According to Colossians 2:14–15 and Revelation 1:17–18, what exactly was defeated at the cross — and what does that mean for those who belong to Him?

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*stepping forward*



Now we are on this side of Calvary, this side of the battle. On victory shore. Christ declared, "It is finished" (John 19:30). The ruler of this world has been cast out and death has been destroyed. The triumph is accomplished. Done. Sealed. Irrevocable.

And yet we still have places of defeat.

Israel had seen Jericho fall. Walls collapsed at the sound of trumpets. The impossible crumbled in a single day. Then came a small city, insignificant, unimpressive Ai, and it exposed their weakness. Not because God had changed. Not because the promise failed. But because sin remained. Great victories do not immunize you from small compromises. One hidden disobedience can turn triumph into tragedy faster than you can blink.

If Israel had defined themselves by defeat, the promise would have seemed void. But the Father did not leave them there. He sent them back with a word of iron-clad assurance: "Do not fear... I have given it into your hand" (Joshua 8:1).

You may have places of ruin, but if you belong to Christ, you never return to those places alone. The Deliverer goes before you. He has already disarmed the enemy. You are not fighting for victory—you are walking in it and more than conquerors already.

So do not settle in the valley of trouble. Do not build a home in defeat. Return in obedience. Stand in faith. Advance in what He has already secured.

Walk in the finished work of the Cross