

## 29. Defeat, then Victory at Ai

### Joshua 7:2-5, 20-22, 25, 8:1-9 CEV

While Israel was still camped near Jericho, Joshua sent some spies with these instructions: "Go to the town of Ai and find out whatever you can about the region around the town." The spies left and went to Ai, which is east of Bethel and near Beth-Aven. They went back to Joshua and reported, "You don't need to send the whole army to attack Ai--two or three thousand troops will be enough. Why bother the whole army for a town that small?"

Joshua sent about three thousand soldiers to attack Ai. But the men of Ai fought back and chased the Israelite soldiers away from the town gate and down the hill to the stone quarries. Thirty-six Israelite soldiers were killed, and the Israelite army felt discouraged.

"It's true," Achan answered. "I sinned and disobeyed the LORD God of Israel. While we were in Jericho, I saw a beautiful Babylonian robe, two hundred pieces of silver, and a gold bar that weighed the same as fifty pieces of gold. I wanted them for myself, so I took them. I dug a hole under my tent and hid the silver, the gold, and the robe."

The people of Israel then stoned to death Achan and his family.

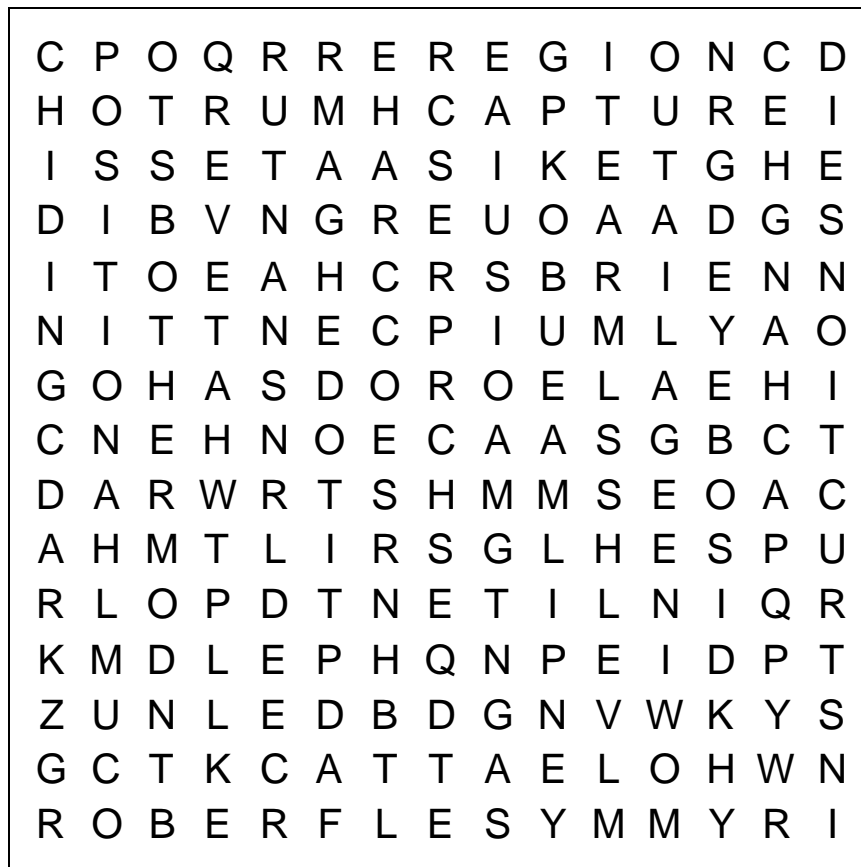
The LORD told Joshua:

Don't be afraid, and don't be discouraged by what happened at the town of Ai. Take the army and attack again. But first, have part of the army set up an ambush on the other side of the town. I will help you defeat the king of Ai and his army, and you will capture the town and the land around it. Destroy Ai and kill its king as you did at Jericho. But you may keep the livestock and everything else you want.

Joshua quickly got the army ready to attack Ai. He chose thirty thousand of his best soldiers and gave them these orders:

Tonight, while it is dark, march to Ai and take up a position behind the town. Get as close to the town as you can without being seen, but be ready to attack.

The rest of the army will come with me and attack near the gate. When the people of Ai come out to fight, we'll run away and let them chase us. They will think we are running from them just like the first time. But when we've let them chase us far enough away, you come out of hiding. The LORD our God will help you capture the town. Then set it on fire, as the LORD has told us to do. Those are your orders, now go!



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ACHAN	DISOBEYED	QUARRIES
AMBUSH	DUG	REGION
ATTACK	HIDING	ROBE
BAR	HOLE	SMALL
BEHIND	INSTRUCTIONS	SPIES
BOTHER	KILL	TENT
CAMPED	MARCH	TROOPS
CAPTURE	MYSELF	WEIGHED
DARK	PIECES	WHATEVER
DISCOURAGED	POSITION	WHOLE