



THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

Lesson 3 – Joshua 7-12



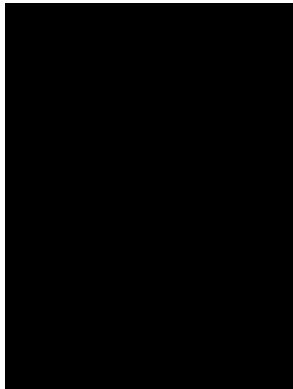
What happened before?

After learning that God had parted the waters of the Jordan River to allow the Israelites to cross on dry land, the people in Canaan were very much afraid. They had good reason to be, because now God was going to overtake them and give the land to Israel.

The Israelites followed God's instructions and captured the city of Jericho. Rahab and her family were spared because she had helped the Israelite spies earlier. Rahab became part of Israel.

Our Story


After the victory at Jericho, Joshua sent men to the city of Ai to check out the land. They came back with the report that there were only a few people in Ai and only a small portion of Israel's army would be needed to take the city. So about three thousand of the Israelites went to fight. This time, the Israelites did not come back shouting victory. When they went up to Ai to take it, the men of Ai put up a powerful resistance. The Israelites had not expected such a fight and when they saw that 36 of their men had been killed, they ran back to the camp of Joshua.



Joshua was so upset over the defeat that his courage weakened. He was so troubled that he tore his clothes and fell on his face before the ark. He cried out to God and said it would have been better if they had remained on the other side of Jordan. He was afraid that all the tribes of Canaan would hear that the Israelites could not take Ai, and they would band together and surround them. "Get up," God told him. He must not let one failure cause him to quit! God told Joshua that someone in Israel had taken something from the city of Jericho and had hidden it among their own things. Remember that God told them not to take anything for themselves. He commanded that all the gold, silver, brass and iron should be put in the treasury of the Lord. Someone had sinned by disobeying God's commands. The Israelites would not be successful in other battles until that man was punished.

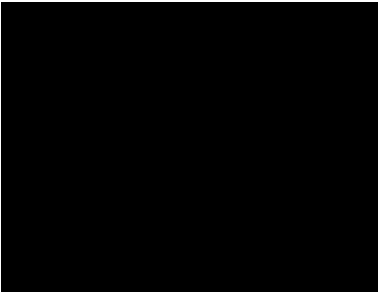
With God's help, Joshua determined that Achan of the tribe of Judah was the man who sinned. Joshua asked him to make a confession. Achan confessed, "I have sinned against Jehovah, the God of Israel." He admitted that when he saw a beautiful garment and some

silver and gold, he coveted them and took them. He then told Joshua the things were hidden in the earth in the middle of his tent. Joshua sent men to the tent and they returned with the things Achan had taken.



Because of Achan's sin, God ordered that he be stoned, and that he and all that he had be burned. After this was done, they placed a great pile of stones there as a reminder to all others that God will punish those who do not keep His commandments.


They were ready to try again to take Ai. God's plan for taking this city was not the same as His plan to take Jericho. God told Joshua to set an ambush. Joshua divided his men into three groups. He sent one group around behind the city and the second group to the side of Ai. They were told to wait there for Joshua's command. Joshua went with another company and camped in the valley before the city. The next morning Joshua and his group of men attacked the city. When the men of Ai came out to fight, Joshua and his men pretended they were afraid and ran away like the Israelites had done before. The men of Ai thought they were running back to their own camp, so they all came pouring out of Ai to chase away the Israelites. When they were all out of the city, Joshua stopped his flight and gave a signal to the other groups who were hidden around the city.



The two groups came out of hiding, attacked the city and set it on fire. When the men of Ai saw the city being attacked they turned back to try to save it. By that time, the Israelites were coming out of the city towards them. Joshua and his men turned back and closed in on the men of Ai. Now, they were completely surrounded by the Israelites. Caught in the

trap, the men of Ai were soon disposed of. God's plan had worked and the Israelites took possession of Ai.

Joshua led the people to a nearby valley, between two mountains, Ebal and Gerizim. Joshua built an altar there. He wrote upon the altar the laws that Moses had given the people from God. The blessings and the cursings along with all the law, which Moses had written down, was read to the people. They were taught to worship God and obey His laws.



A group of strange men in old clothes came into the camp of Israel at Gilgal. They told Joshua they were from a country that was a long way

off. They said their clothes, sandals and wineskins, which were new when they left home, were now old and patched. They also said that the bread, which was now dry and moldy, had been taken from the oven on the day they left home. They told Joshua they had heard how God had defeated all the nations in Canaan that had resisted him. They knew that their country would also be overcome by the Israelites if they fought against them. They did not want their country destroyed, so they had come to make a treaty with the Israelites. The men of Israel agreed not to fight them.

Three days later, Joshua found out that the men were really from the city of Gibeon, which was only a little way beyond Ai. They had worked a clever trick on Joshua. When Joshua learned the truth about these men, he said he would keep his promise not to destroy them, but he would make them serve Israel. They would have to cut wood and carry water for the Israelites.

The king of Jerusalem heard that the men of Gibeon had made a treaty with the Israelites. He called together some other kings in the country and told them what had happened. Four other kings agreed to join forces with Jerusalem to destroy the Gibeonites.

The five kings from the south of Canaan marched against Gibeon. They were ready to attack! The men of Gibeon sent runners to Joshua and asked that he come to their aid quickly. Joshua assembled his army and marched all that night to Gibeon. When morning came, the battle began. As they were fighting, God caused a hailstorm to come to help the Israelites. Great hailstones fell and killed more of the enemy than the soldiers of Israel did.

As the day wore on, Joshua saw that the battle could not be won before the sun went down. He didn't want any of the enemies to get back to their cities where they could hide, so he prayed to God that the sun would stand still. The record says, "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies." There was never a day like that—not before that time or after—when the sun did not go down for a whole day.

When the five kings saw they were losing the battle, they ran and hid in a cave. Word was brought to Joshua and he immediately had the five kings brought out and hung them. Then Joshua told his men not to be afraid, but be strong and of good courage, for God would do this to all their enemies.

Joshua led his army on into the southern part of Canaan and captured the remaining cities in that part of the land.

Jabin, the king of Hazor, had learned what happened in the south and called twelve of the northern kings together. They all agreed to band together and fight against Israel. When Joshua heard that they were assembled at the waters of Merom, he marched his army rapidly toward them. He attacked so quickly that the enemy was caught completely off guard. In the surprise attack it did not take Joshua's army long to dispose of their enemy. They captured many horses and chariots. This was Joshua's last great battle.

Since so many of the kings had joined together and been defeated by the Israelites, Joshua had taken possession of most of the northern section of Canaan in this one battle. After that, Joshua went through the northern section of the country and defeated the smaller groups of the enemy and took possession of herds of cattle and other valuable things. In all, Joshua had conquered thirty-one kings.

After the Israelites had taken all the land of Canaan, they rested from war at the camp they had set up at Gilgal.

