



10. AN UNEXPECTED DEFEAT

(JOSHUA 8:1)

After a great victory at Jericho, Joshua had not expected defeat at the next city, Ai. God explained the reason for Israel's defeat. Someone had disobeyed God's instruction that the people must not take anything from Jericho for themselves. The sinner must be identified and the sin punished.

Joshua followed God's instructions. He went through the tribes, then the families, until he came to one man, Achan. Achan confessed that he had taken gold, silver and clothing from Jericho. He had hidden these in his tent. Achan was put to death: his sin had caused Israel's defeat.

It was not easy to attack Ai a second time. The people of that city would have been confident that they could win again. God spoke to Joshua: '**Do not be afraid ...** See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land.' Strengthened by God's words, Joshua led the Israelites to victory once again.





There are lessons for us to learn from the events at Ai. All Christians have battles to fight, and God has provided armour for us (Ephesians 6:10-18). We will all, at some time, know temptation from the devil. He is the enemy of all those who love God. We also have our own particular weak points. Some of us are quick-tempered, others are prone to speak too quickly and thoughtlessly, some are envious of other people's success or possessions.

When we give way to sinful words or actions, we know that God will forgive us if we confess our sin to Him (1 John 1:9). But we may feel defeated and like Joshua, need God's word of encouragement.

READ

Joshua chapters 7 and 8:1-3; Isaiah 41:10; Ephesians 6:10-18.

QUESTIONS

1. Why were the Israelites defeated at Ai? (Joshua 7:11).
2. Describe the steps to disobedience that Achan took. (Joshua 7:21).
3. Memorise Isaiah 41:10.

