
Day 70 – March 11

Conquering the Land (1400 – 1100 BCE)

The Taking of Jericho and Ai

Readings: *Joshua 6:1-8:33*

Reflections:

- This is a passage that is really hard to read and digest. The Lord's direction to exterminate these cities seems completely opposite to what Christ-followers are taught. The only parallel in the teachings of Jesus is the prophecy against Jerusalem. In a similar fashion Jerusalem was wiped out in 70 CE as Jesus had prophesied. In that prophecy he states that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple is his doing. So God does judge and he is free to bring judgment against people in this life or in the next. Praise God that we are under Christ and have been given the ministry of reconciliation.
- The symbolism of Jericho is that God leads the people into battle and he does the impossible in wiping out the walls. The Levites lead the army into battle and they are the only ones who are not allowed to fight. So it was again God showing that if God is for you who can be against you.
- Rahab is saved as promised. Again this shows that we cannot judge by appearances.
- The whole story of Ai is told to highlight the arrogance of Israel. They get humiliated and Joshua is ready to give up. So much for faith in God. Even the best leaders have a hard time hanging in if things go very badly.
- The story of Achan who stole forbidden things from Jericho is frightening and sad. He covets, steals and gets stoned. The whole way he is identified would have produced terror through all of Israel. Again no mercy is shown but only the lesson of judgment. Just to note, this public awful punishment does not stop Israel from failing in the future. In Ezekiel, the priest's themselves apparently have idols secretly hidden away. Again, the Law, punishment and fear do not ultimately work to change the human heart. With this said, God will still judge people, not to change them but to simply bring their sin to judgment.
- The truly ironic and sad thing for Achan is that if he would have waited just a couple of days he could have had everything he wanted. He could have had with God's blessing all the plunder he wanted in Ai. Notice, coveting only is coveting when you are trying to

take something God has told you not to take. If God gives you something you can have it and it isn't coveting.

- The ambush shows the shrewdness of Joshua. The king is judged horribly. These cities practiced extensive human sacrifice and sexually abusive worship. So, God's judgment seems harsh but in context we may have better understood his fury. Also, it was these practices that would continually tempt Israel away from trusting in God and being a light to the nations.
- This section ends with the Law being read. This again highlights that the people at this point are seeking to understand and follow the will of God. We need more than law. We need the Spirit of God working through us with his power in our weakness. Praise God for Jesus and for his grace to us!