

## A NEW OFFENSIVE

Israel's first offensive against Ai was a military disaster! (ch.7) "They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people (Israel) melted and became like water." (Josh.7:5)

The reason for this defeat was the sin of Achan who violated the cherem war ban. (Josh.6:18; 7:20-21) "Why have you brought trouble on us (divine discipline)? The Lord will bring trouble on you today." (Josh.7:25)

The commander of the Lord's army (Josh.5:13-16) meets again with Joshua with plans for a New Offensive against Ai. "Then the Lord said to Joshua, 'do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai, for I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land.'" (Josh.8:1)

We will examine our lesson text by the following four homiletical points of the New Offensive against Ai.

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|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Josh.8:1-2   | Promise of victory     | All of Ai.            |
| • Josh.8:3-9   | Plan of victory        | Ambush strategy       |
| • Josh.8:10-22 | Performance of victory | Anticipating behavior |
| • Josh.8:23-29 | Prize of victory       | Appraisal of booty    |

**This lesson will study SIX aspects of the New Offensive against Ai.  
Israel is instructed to take a second offensive against an old area of defeat.  
This lesson will be helpful for believers who have experienced some tragedy or defeat in their lives  
and may be fearful and hesitant to take a New Offensive against it.**

### **1. The believer who has experienced failure in a specific area of life must be willing to accept new challenges in the plan of God.**

He must accept this new challenge by the divine operating assets and not by the worldly ones.

He must not withdraw from the challenge of the new offensive out of fear and doubt because of past bad experiences: "Surely my soul remembers and is bowed down within me." (Lam.3:20)

The Lord counseled Joshua to not be afraid or dismayed with the New Offensive against Ai, the place of past defeat: "I will instruct you and teach you the way which you shall go; I will guide you with mine eye."(Ps.32:8; 27:7)

A New Offensive will cause the spiritual advancing believer to focus attention on the specific of the word of God this time.

### **2. Pre-occupation with past painful failures can be projected into future new offensives.**

If the Believer does not deal with the past failures according to the word of God, he will bring the mental anguish of past failures into the new experience.

We have to be commanded to get off our face and to get on our feet! (Josh.7:10-13) "Stand up! What are you doing down on your face?" "Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid; do not be dismayed." (Josh.8:1; Ps.56:3-4)

"Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go." (**Josh.1:5-6**)

“But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead.” (Phil.3:13)

**3. The Lord understands that the old man tendency of traumatic human experiences is fear, self-doubt, and disillusionment.**

The Lord understands that recall of old painful bad experiences can produce mental anguish as part of memory recall.

The spiritual advancing believer must be careful not to engage in old man defensive mechanism.

**4. Psychological defense mechanisms are used to protect old man from further painful experiences of life.**

They are human resources used to soften or alleviate the mental anguish and to salvage feeling of self-worth. They are actually self-deception and distortion of the reality of the truth. For the believed, they are part of walking by sight and not by faith (2 Cor.5:7).

We will mention five to give examples:

**Escapism** (evading by ignoring or refusing or avoiding by denying the painful reality)

**Fantasy** (step beyond avoidance, it constructs an imaginary pleasant world we can escape.)

**Regression** (retreat to behavior that is primitive and often infantile modes of behavior like unhappy bride runs home to parents)

**Compensation** (feeling of inferiority and inadequacy growing out of personal failure – overcompensation attempts to substitute like child becomes loud or bully)

**Displacement** (shift or transfer of emotions from one object of frustration to another like bad day at work and takes it out on family).

**5. It is possible for spiritually mature Believers to revert back to old man ways of dealing with painful and personal traumatic experiences.**

Peter engaged in denial and avoidance in Matt.26:69-75. Why did he revert to old man thinking?

Because it was attached to rejection of truth of the Word of God related to his denial.

Matt.16:21-23 “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God; but the things of men.” (Matt.16:23, NIV)

The spiritually advancing Believer must learn to break from old man thinking patterns:

“Do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Rom.12:2, NIV)

“That your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.” (1 Cor.2:5)

Failure in faith sets the Believer up for sight substitutions like worldly defense mechanism.

However, mental anguish can be experienced under the divine faith system:

“For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not that you should be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.” (2 Cor.2:4)

Jesus experienced it at Gethsemane (Matt.26:36-46).