

# Joshua 8:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land:

## Analysis

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**And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land:**

Following the devastating defeat at Ai due to Achan's sin (chapter 7), God graciously renews His promise to Joshua. The divine command "Fear not, neither be thou dismayed" uses two Hebrew terms: al-tira (אֲלֹתֵרָא, "do not fear") addresses emotional dread, while al-techath (אֲלֹתֵתָה, "do not be dismayed") addresses loss of courage or shattering of resolve. This dual reassurance acknowledges the psychological trauma of defeat while redirecting focus to divine sovereignty.

The phrase "I have given" (natati, נָתַתִּי) employs the prophetic perfect tense, expressing future victory as already accomplished fact from God's perspective. This grammatical construction appears throughout Joshua, emphasizing that Yahweh's promises are certain despite present circumstances. The comprehensive list—"king... people... city... land"—indicates total conquest, leaving nothing outside God's gift.

Significantly, God commands Joshua to take "all the people of war" this time, contrasting with the previous failed assault using only a portion of the army

(7:3-4). This teaches that presumption (acting without full obedience) differs from faith (acting on God's explicit command). God's sovereign grace in providing another opportunity demonstrates the covenant faithfulness central to Reformed theology.

## Historical Context

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Following the defeat at Ai (7:1-5), Israel executed judgment on Achan and his household (7:24-26), restoring covenant purity. The name "Ai" (אֵי, ha'ai) means "the ruin" or "heap of ruins," likely referring to an earlier Bronze Age city. Archaeological excavations at et-Tell (identified by many with Ai) show occupation gaps, though this identification remains debated. Some scholars propose Ai was a military outpost of Bethel.

The strategy of feigned retreat reflects common ancient Near Eastern military tactics, as documented in Egyptian and Mesopotamian records. Joshua's plan demonstrates that faith does not eliminate wise planning; rather, God uses human means to accomplish His purposes. Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim (visible from Ai's vicinity) would soon become the setting for covenant renewal (8:30-35), fulfilling Moses' command in Deuteronomy 27.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How does God's encouragement after failure demonstrate His covenant faithfulness when we experience setbacks due to sin?

- What does the prophetic perfect tense ("I have given") teach us about resting in God's promises before seeing their fulfillment?
- How does this passage balance divine sovereignty (God's gift) with human responsibility (military action)?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה	אֶל	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	אֶל	יְהוָה	אֶל	יְהוָה	אֶל	יְהוָה
<b>said</b>	<b>And the LORD</b>	H413	<b>unto Joshua</b>	H3091			<b>Fear</b>	H408	
H559	H3068			H3372			H408		
נְאָמֵן	בְּכָל	עַמְּךָ	אֶת	עַמְּךָ	בְּכָל	עַמְּךָ	וְ	עַמְּךָ	וְ
<b>not</b>	<b>neither</b>	<b>be thou dismayed</b>		<b>take</b>	H5973	H853	<b>all the people</b>	H3605	H5971
H2865			H3947						
בְּמָלֹכתִּי	בְּעֵלָה	בְּעֵלָה	בְּעֵלָה	בְּעֵלָה	רָא	רָא	בְּנֵת	בְּנֵת	
<b>of war</b>	<b>with thee and arise</b>	H6965	<b>go up</b>	H5927	<b>of Ai</b>	H5857	<b>see</b>	H7200	<b>I have given</b>
H4421									H5414
בְּיַדְךָ	אֶת	אֶת	אֶת	אֶת	וְאֶת	וְאֶת	וְאֶת	וְאֶת	
<b>into thy hand</b>	H853	<b>the king</b>	H4428	<b>of Ai</b>	H853	<b>all the people</b>	H5971	H853	<b>and his city</b>
H3027									H5892
אֶת	אֶת	אֶת	אֶת	אֶת	אֶת	אֶת	אֶת	אֶת	
<b>and his land</b>	H853								
	H776								

## Additional Cross-References

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**Joshua 1:9** (References Lord): Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

**Deuteronomy 7:18** (References Lord): Thou shalt not be afraid of them: but shalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt;

**Deuteronomy 1:21** (References Lord): Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged.

**Deuteronomy 31:8** (References Lord): And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

**Joshua 6:2** (Kingdom): And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.

**Isaiah 43:2** (Parallel theme): When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

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